

The Ramala Lectures

# INDIAN CULTURE

## ITS STRANDS AND TRENDS

*(A Study in Contrasts)*

I would have you day by day fix your eyes upon the greatness of your country, until you become filled with the love of her, and when you are impressed by the spectacle of her glory, reflect that it has been acquired by men, who knew their duty and had the courage to do it.—*Pericles*.

HIRENDRANATH DATTA, M.A., B.L.  
P.R.S., VEDANTARATNA



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THE FOUNDER

## THE FOUNDER'S LETTER

77, RUSSA ROAD, NORTH,  
BHOWANIPORE,  
CALCUTTA.

9th February, 1924.

To

THE REGISTRAR,  
CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY.

SIR,

I desire to place, at the disposal of my University, Government Securities for Rupees Forty Thousand only of the 3 per cent Loan with a view to establish a Lectureship, to be called the *Kamala Lectureship*, in memory of my beloved daughter Kamala (b. 18th April, 1895—d. 4th January, 1923). The Lecturer, who will be annually appointed by the Senate, will deliver a course of not less than three lectures, either in Bengali or in English, on some aspect of Indian Life and Thought, the subject to be treated from a comparative standpoint.

The following scheme shall be adopted for the Lectureship :—

(1) Not later than the 31st March, every year, a Special Committee of five members shall be constituted as follows :

One member of the Faculty of Arts to be nominated by the Faculty.

One member of the Faculty of Science to be nominated by the Faculty.

One member to be nominated by the Council of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

One member to be nominated by the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad.

One member to be nominated by the Founder or his representatives.

(2) The Special Committee, after such enquiry as they may deem necessary, shall, not later than the 30th June, draw up a report recommending to the Senate the name of the distinguished scholar. The report shall specify the subject of the proposed lectures and shall include a brief statement of their scope.

(3) The report of the Special Committee shall be forwarded to the Syndicate in order that it may

be laid before the Senate for confirmation not later than the 31st July.

(4) The Senate may, for specified reasons, request the Special Committee to reconsider their decision but shall not be competent to substitute another name for the one recommended by the Committee.

(5) The Lecturer appointed by the Senate shall deliver the lectures at the Senate House not later than the month of January next following.

(6) The Syndicate shall, after the lectures are delivered in Calcutta, arrange to have them delivered, in the original or in a modified form, in at least one place out of Calcutta, and shall for this purpose pay such travelling allowance as may be necessary.

(7) The honorarium of the Lecturer shall consist of a sum of Rupees One Thousand in cash and a Gold Medal of the value of Rupees Two Hundred only. The honorarium shall be paid only after the lectures have been delivered and the Lecturer has made over to the Registrar a complete copy of the lectures in a form ready for publication.

(8) The lectures shall be published by the University within six months of their delivery and, after defraying the cost of publication, the surplus sale proceeds shall be paid to the Lecturer, in whom the copyright of the lectures shall vest.

(9) No person, who has once been appointed a Lecturer, shall be eligible for re-appointment before the lapse of five years.

Yours faithfully,  
ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE.



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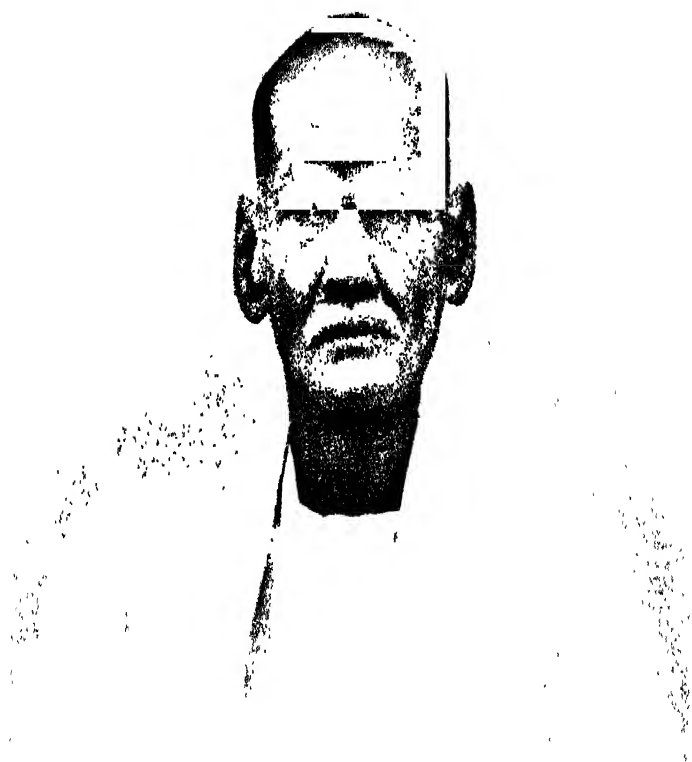
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THE LECTURER

# INDIAN CULTURE

## ITS STRANDS AND TRENDS

*(A Study in Contrasts)*

### FIRST LECTURE

FRIENDS,

I am deeply sensible of the signal honour conferred on me, by my election to the Chair of the Kamala Lectureship this year. Coming, as I do, after a brilliant galaxy of lecturers, beginning with Dr. Annie Besant, I naturally feel dwarfed and diminished; none-the-less, having taken up my cross, I must carry it to the appointed goal, though suffering terribly all the way, by contrast. At the same time, it is a source of pride and pleasure to me that, however unworthily, I am filling the same chair that was first occupied by my revered Guru, Dr. Annie Besant—for you will recall that, deservedly, she was the first Kamala Lecturer.

The general title of this my Lecture-series is “Indian Culture : Its Strands and Trends (A Study in Contrasts)”. The full implication of this title will become clear as I proceed with my course, which will extend to five lectures, the fourth lecture being divided into two sections.

## WHAT IS CULTURE

Now, what is culture? But, first of all, what is its derivation and its dictionary meanings? At the first blush, it may appear that the word "Culture" is a derivative of "cult," by adding to it the suffix "ure,"—which suffix words like Nature, Picture, Literature, Legislature, Judicature, etc., have made familiar. We know, however, that "Cult," derived from the Latin "Cultus" through the French "Culte," means an organised system of religious worship or ceremonial, and that "culture," though an allied word, cannot be its derivative. "Culture" and its French prototype "culture" are both from the Latin "Cultura," meaning "cultivating" or "tending"—for example, of plants or animals. So we speak of seri-culture and pisci-culture, and the New English (Oxford) Dictionary gives the following as one of the current meanings of "Culture"—"the rearing or raising of certain animals, such as fish, oysters, bees, etc., or of natural products such as silk." From that, the figurative use of "culture" is but one step removed, where the word means—"the cultivating or development (of the mind, faculties, manners),—improvement or refinement, by education and training." Thus we hear of "an earnest culture of the arts of peace" (Bancroft). We have it on high authority, that "*Sthāne sthāninaḥ*"\* is not at all

unusual. So Murray finally gives the current meaning of "culture" as the condition of being trained and developed, and having one's mind, tastes and manners refined and developed, and Mathew Arnold, in his "Literature and Dogma," speaks of culture as the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known.

Now, as you may be aware, our "Hindi-phil" friends—who have definitely made up their minds that Hindi, or rather, what they call "Hindusthani," is to be the *Rāshṭriya Bhāshā* of this sub-continent (though no unified *rāshṭra* is yet visible on the offing)—are bringing into vogue the word "*Samskṛti*" (संस्कृति) as a substitute for "culture" and some of us are imitating them in Bengal. I venture to think that that expression is not a happy one, and it and its cognate "*Samś-kāra*" had better be reserved to connote what is called "Reformation"—the old Vedic word *Kṛshṭi* (कृष्टि) being used as the appropriate synonym for "Culture." "*Kṛshṭi*," as you know, is derived from the root "*Kṛsh*" (कृष्) to cultivate, whence "*Kṛshaka*" (कृषक) and "*Karshaṇa*" (कर्षण) of which "*Charshaṇa*" (चर्षण) is a variant,\* and it is thus allied to the Latin "Cultura"

\* In the *R̥gveda* we come across the word चर्षणी—निवस्य चर्षणीधृतः श्रवो देवस्य सानसि (३।५२।६)—meaning cultivator, मनुष्य. It is imitated in the later *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*:—

स चर्षणीनामुदगात् श्रवो मजन्

प्रियः प्रियाया इव दीर्घ-दर्शनः ।—१०।२८।२

(cultivating). I am aware that in the R̥gveda the word “*Kṛshṭi*” is used as a general name for man (*Manushya*), as in मित्रः कृष्टीरनिमिषाऽभिचष्टे (३।५।१) (कृष्टयः इति मनुष्य-नाम—सायण). But that was because in those ancient days, the Aryan was, first and foremost, the tiller, the cultivator. I think, however, that it is permissible, in our days, by a process of reversion, to use the word “*Kṛshṭi*” (कृष्टि) as the most appropriate synonym for “Culture.”

Apart, however, from derivations and dictionary meanings, what are we to understand by the word “Culture” in the present context, when I am speaking of Indian Culture? As you know, “Culture” has been variously defined. In fact, it carries diverse connotations to diverse minds. I do not propose to try your patience by making an excursion into that dubious region. What I mean by culture or *Kṛshṭi* is the *outer* expression of the *inner genius* of a people, and it is in that sense that I am speaking of “Indian Culture.”

### NATIONAL “UNIQUENESS” OF CULTURE

That implies—does it not?—that each nation, e.g., the Indian nation, the Chinese nation, the English nation, the French nation, the German nation, etc., etc., is distinct from every other nation—that what we call a “nation” is not a mere assemblage of individuals, as is a heap of sands or a stack of bricks, but is more and greater

than the assembled units, and further, that each nation possesses an "individual uniqueness" (I am borrowing Emerson's wonderful phrase), which sets it apart from all other nations, past or present. Let me say just a few words to justify these implications. Biological science has familiarised us with the idea of "organism"—what is called "*Samghāta*" (संघात) in this country—which is not, by any means, a mere fortuitous concourse of parts. In an organism, e.g., a plant or an animal-body, the units, the parts, the cells composing it, are bound together, in what is called "organic unity." They are inspired by the same life, move forward to the same objective, and stand towards each other in the same relation, as the limbs of the human body do in relation to that body. That is to say, in an organism, the parts are separate but not disparate, different but not distinct, and each fulfils its allotted function—not in opposition to any other, but in subservience to the common good. The same, in the higher realm of Sociology, is true of a nation. Every true nation is not a mere congeries of individuals juxtaposed one by the side of others. It is a *Samghāta*, an organism—in Vedāntic language, a "*Samashṭi*" (समष्टि)—composed by the fusion of the individual "*Vyashṭis*" (व्यष्टि's), and thus constitutes a distinct *State*. That, we may be sure, is in accord with what Sir Ray Lankester calls "Nature's predestined plan." What is that plan? To create, at all levels, higher and more and more complex organisms or *Samghātas*, in which the

individual units, each with a distinct life and purpose of its own, are linked together in a vital organic unity to subserve the purpose of the whole, until ultimately is reached the *Viśva-rūpa* of the Vedānta—"an Organism great enough to express the unity of the Divine Life (immanent in the world), and complex enough to give play to all its infinite multiplicity of manifestation."

Each nation then is an organism—a *Samghāta*. It is a unit and, what is more, it is unique. Each nation, as Mazzini pointed out many decades ago, is designed to sound out a distinctive note of its own in the chord of the universal symphony—a unique note that no other nation can sound out. That is what I have in mind when I speak of a nation's distinctive genius, its individual uniqueness, what we call in Hindu Philosophy its *Svālakṣhanya* (स्वालक्षण्य). That genius, we may be sure, reacts to life in its own individual way and is bodied forth in that nation's outlook on life,—its religion, philosophy, literature, arts and institutions.

### “SVĀLAKSHANYA” OF INDIAN CULTURE

What then is the individual uniqueness of the Indian Nation, as embodied in Indian Culture?

But I can hear someone objecting—Is India a nation, with its many races and provinces and divisions and subdivisions? Bewildered by the



varieties, physical, geographical, racial, sociological, and religious,—one is sometimes apt to lose sight of the *fundamental unity of India* and her indivisibility. But a little spiritual perception, a little diving beneath the surface, is enough to satisfy anyone that India, our common Motherland, is one—is a unit and is unique. What then are the fundamental characteristics of Indian Culture—what I call its “strands”?

### ANTIQUITY OF INDIAN CULTURE

The very first thing that strikes one with regard to Indian Culture, is its hoary antiquity—its primaeval *Prāchīnatā* (प्राचीनता). Were it endowed with human voice, it might have said with Jesus—“Before Abraham was, *I am*.” It is (I venture to assert this against the views of European scholars) undoubtedly anterior to the Indus civilization, about which Orientalists have been enthusing, since traces of it were unearthed at Harappa and Mohenjodaro. It saw the rise and fall of classical Greece and imperial Rome, and of Assyria, Persia, Babylon and Mexico. With the possible exceptions of ancient Egypt (before it was Aryanised) and China (before its contact with Indian Buddhism and *Mahā-Yāna* Tantricism), Indian Culture is of the greatest antiquity, among all the known cultures of our globe.

What is more—though age-old, it is still alive and active. In face of the fact (I am using the

words of Āchāryya J. B. Kripalani) “ that Babylon, Unan, Egypt, Rome and all ancient lands and peoples have perished and the new nations of the West are diligently digging their graves, India still lives ”, though tidal waves of foreign invasion—of Yavanas, Sakas, Hunas, Turanis, Iranis, Turks, Pathans and Mongols, not to speak of European eruptions in more modern times—have successively swept over the Indian continent, any one of which would have been sufficient to overwhelm any other nation. That shews (and I want to stress this fact) that Indian Culture contains a special vitality. It is possessed of a power that has kept it alive in the midst of all these adverse circumstances in the various periods of its history.

### IMMORTALITY OF INDIAN CULTURE

That then is another characteristic of Indian Culture—its immortality, its *Mṛtyuñjayatā* (मृत्युञ्जयता). What is the secret of its achievement of *Amṛtatva* (अमृतत्व), we shall try to discover presently. But let us first make quite sure about the fact of immortality, before we try to uncover its mystery.

Friends! You will recollect that, a little over a year ago, every loyal member of the Indian National Congress, which rightly claims all-India allegiance, was, under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi, called upon to take the following sweeping pledge :—

“ The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom, but has *ruined* India economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually.’ ”

I am not concerned here with the sins of commission and omission of the British Government ( which Government, by the way, the Mahatma, with characteristic non-violence in thought, has dubbed as “ Satanic ” )—sins, which, according to the above pledge, have brought about the economic and political “ ruination ” of India—but what about its “ cultural and spiritual ruination ” ? Gandhiji, in expounding and expanding the “ pledge ” in his “ Harijan,” indulged in a bit of what I cannot help calling “ claptrap.” He asked—“ What about the latest circular (the authenticity of which has been disputed), reproduced in these columns, which prescribed repeated bowings at an investiture ceremony in the U.P. ? Is not this cultural and spiritual degradation ? ” and the Mahatma (from his view-point) clinched the matter with the following sentence—“ Our household was turned upside down, when my father had to attend the Durbar, during a Governor’s visit. He never wore stockings or boots or what were then called ‘ whole boots ’.” But what call, may I ask, had Mahatmaji’s father, who evidently decked himself with these trappings on that momentous occasion (I trust, he did not cumber his neck with South African

medals)—what call, I ask, had he to attend the Governor's Durbar? There are now and were at that time hundreds of people in Bengal, who, though invited, never attend Durbars, attendance at which, as we all know, is not compulsory as in the Mughal days. Moreover, has not Gandhiji himself more than redeemed the ancestral lapse by bearding the British Lion himself, in the person of the King-Emperor, in his den in Buckingham Palace, by appearing before him in his *langote* and loin cloth? But let that pass. Gandhiji, proceeding further with his exposition of the Congress pledge, goes on :—

“Should Englishmen take pride in the fact that many educated Indians cannot express themselves sufficiently in their own mother tongues, and that they have to transmit their inmost thoughts to their dear ones in the English language? I ask them to realise with me the enormity of the ruination of culture that this fact means. Many educated Indians have become *Sahebblogs* in their own land and there is no living contact between them and the masses.”

The Mahatma proceeds :—

“ . . . Educated India has been disabled from reaching the masses. . . . . The conversion of Englishmen will not be complete, if they do not realise the truth of the fourfold ruination of India. . . . .

“The existing system of Government has drained the country of its wealth and reduced the peasantry to pauperism. Political subjection is patent. Cultural and spiritual conquest has at no time in India’s history been so complete as during the British rule. It is none-the-less galling or degrading, because there has been a voluntary surrender. A victim’s conquest is complete when he hugs the chains that bind him and begins to imitate the manners and customs of his captor.”

These thoughts, friends, are quite familiar to us in Bengal, and I myself, so far as the cultural aspect is concerned, have expounded them in my humble way in my “Dārśanik Baṅkim Chandra.” It is undoubted that, in the first flush of Western education and contact with European culture, the possibility arose (it was never *more* than that) of our becoming “Imitation Fairangas”—mere copies and bad ones at that, who, like their prototype Nimchānd in Dinabandhu’s “Rake’s Progress,” “read English, wrote English, talked English, speechified in English, thought in English and even dreamed in English.” In fact, that was Lord Macaulay’s hope, when he foisted English Education on India, whose aim in his words was “to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.”

But the genius of India asserted itself, and with its wonderful power of assimilation (about which I shall have something to say in my next lecture), while not rejecting the new culture, transmuted it, and, in less than fifty years, dominated it and thus *saved its soul*.

In the long history of Indian Culture, this was by no means a novel phenomenon. There was, after Alexander's conquest and annexation of parts of what are now known as the Punjab and the Frontier Province, the risk of North-Western India being "Hellenised." But in less than a century, Hellenism had been overmastered and the adverse currents canalised, so that we find in the 2nd century B.C. a Greek student at the Taxila University, Heliodore by name, the son of Dion, a liegeman of King Antialkidus, dedicating, with the zeal of a neophyte, a *Garuḍa-dhvaja*, a stone votive offering to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the following inscription :—

“देवदेवस वासुदेवस गरुडध्वजो अयं कारिते इय हिलि-  
ओडोरिण भागवतेन दियन-पुत्रेण तक्षशिलाकेन योनदातेन  
आगतेन महाराजस अंतलिकतस उपंता संकाशराणो इत्यादि ।”

Later still and skipping over a few centuries, we find the whole of Āryāvarta (I mean Northern India) in the same predicament, and Indian Culture confronted with the risk of being swamped and “Islamised.” How imminent that risk was you

will appreciate, if, for instance, you go and live in one of the Rajput States for a few weeks, say at Jaipur, whose Court, to all intents and purposes, is a reproduction of the departed Mughal Court at Agra or Delhi, with its Rangmahal and its 64 *Khānās*—its Atiskhana, Pilkhana, Sutarkhana, Shikarkhana, Patangkhanā, Kirkirkhana, Toshākhana, Mālkhana, Daptarkhana, etc., etc. But the genius of Indian culture once more asserted itself, and, before it was too late, a return movement had begun with Ramdas and Sivaji and Nanak and Guru Govind Singh, and Rana Rajsinha and Ranjit Singh and last but not least with Śrī Chaitanya and his galaxy of saints and sages in Bengal, and the resurgent tide of Indian Culture swept away the obstructive weeds which had threatened to choke the national life—at the same time adopting and assimilating what was best in Islamic culture. It should be noted that for establishing what is called “Pax Britannica” in India, the East India Company had to fight and conquer, not Mughals or Pathans but Marathas and Sikhs and Rajputs and Tamilians. This demonstrates in a convincing manner what I may call the remarkable resiliency of Indian Culture.

### RUINATION (?) OF INDIAN CULTURE

Coming to the British period, I am free to admit that the aim, conscious or unconscious, of

the imperialistic East India Company (which, having gained admission to trade in India, stayed to traduce) was what Gandhiji calls the ruination of Indian Culture, and at one time it seemed that they were going to succeed. For we find that the whole atmosphere, as the result of the "new Enlightenment" (?), was becoming apparently surcharged with the miasma of "de-nationalism". The new wine had gone to the head of the English-educated classes, and was turning and addling it. They forgot that they were the inheritors of the oldest living culture of the world, and were profoundly ignorant of the majesty and grandeur of that culture; so that Colonel Olcott, the founder of the Theosophical Society, was quite right, when he good-naturedly railed at their self-satisfied complacency and supercilious pride in their meretricious B.A. and M.A. degrees and called them "bad Aryans" and "mad Aryans". Once again, however, and before it became too late by "Indianism" being swamped, the genius of Indian Culture asserted itself and what threatened to be a dire disaster was turned into a glorious victory. The return movement, which began with Raja Ram Mohun Roy, daily gained in momentum until it became a sweeping tide. Take, as illustration, our own *Sāhitya-Guru* Bāṅkim Chandra. • If you are at all acquainted with his writings, you must know how he began as a convinced "Anglo-phil", but very soon turned the corner and was found vigorously inveighing against the Anglicisa-



tion of Indian Culture, and heaping ridicule, in his inimitable way, on *Naḱal Saheb* blogs, who aped European manners. These bounders, the *soi-disant* educated Babus, he pointed out, disdained to write or talk in their mother tongue, and in their mouth water tasted insipid unless poured down their throats from a tumbler; and he did not hesitate to characterise them as स्वधर्मभ्रष्ट, कदाचार, दुराशय, असार and अनालाप्य, that is to say, “denationalised, demoralised, wicked, worthless and degenerate.” So the attempt of the English rulers of India to ruin Indian Culture failed and failed egregiously. No doubt, they proposed, but some one else (I mean the *Bhārata Bhāgya Vidhātā*) disposed. So, after all, they might have appropriately repeated the old slogan—*Uṭā Bujhili Rām!*

If the assertion in the Congress pledge as regards the ruination of Indian Culture were well-founded, how could we explain the stupendous fact that, during the past one hundred years, and in spite of British domination, there have been born some of the noblest sons of India—not in one province alone, but throughout the Indian continent—men like Ram Mohun Roy, Ram Krishna Paramhansa, Swami Dayanand, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Salar Jung, Sir T. Madhav Rao, Sir Syed Ahmed, Diwan Raghunath Rao, Ranade, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gokhale, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, Swami Vivekananda, Sir Jagadish Bose, Bankim Chandra,

Rabindranath and, last but not least, Gandhiji himself ? Even if we regard the Mahatma as a spiritual freak or rather as an *avatar*, as some of his devout followers believe him to be, so that in the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa “जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यम्”—his *janma* and *karma* are inscrutable—how, if the ruination of Indian Culture be true and real, are we to explain the rise of so many geniuses (I have by no means exhausted the list) in the course of a single century ? It seems strange that this fact, which is patent in Bengal and in many other parts of India, should have escaped Gandhiji’s notice. Or, are we to conclude that Gandhiji’s own province, Guzerat, is so backward as not to have felt the refreshing breath of the Indian Renaissance, which has surged in the other provinces of India, and that Guzerat is still floundering in the backwaters of slave-mentality and defeatism ?

घर करिनु बाहिर, बाहिर करिनु घर

पर करिनु आपन, आपन करिनु पर

—Guzerat, from where we in Bengal from time immemorial have been, to our great benefit, importing Guzerati *Elaichis* and rarely *Gurjaris* with their “*Uroja ranjan*” (I am using Dīnabandhu’s phrase) and also importing, in these later days, to our serious detriment, Tolstoyan non-resistance and—God save the mark !—non-violence, setting aside the injunction of our Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa—“*Tasmād*

*yudhyasva Bhārata*—therefore, fight a good fight, oh Arjuna ! ”

As regards this non-violence, I am free to confess that I have no faith in it and am satisfied that it is non-Aryan and opposed to Indian Culture and, if practised on a national scale, will breed *Klaivya* (क्लैव्य), thus reducing us to spineless eunuchs; I shall not dilate on this topic here, but content myself with quoting the eloquent words of Dr. Amarnath Jha, Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University, in his Mysore Convocation Address of the 14th October, 1940 :—

“ Our homes are threatened with destruction. Our motherland may arouse the covetous greed of an invader. In circumstances like these—which alas ! are not rare—it would be the negation of wisdom and height of logical imbecility to sing hymns and psalms and remind the aggressor of the supreme value of human life, the folly of his ways and the attractions of a non-violent peace.”

I, therefore, venture to think that when Gandhiji spoke of the cultural and spiritual ruination of India under British rule, he had, for the time being, lost his usual clarity of vision and was indulging in exaggeration and mystification. Were a lesser person concerned than an inspired

Mahatma, I would, in the words of the Christ, have rebuked him—"O ye of little faith" and reminded him that Indian Culture, being *Mṛtyuñ-jaya*, being endowed with immortality, cannot and shall not die—it may suffer temporary obscuration, but ruination ?—never !

But what is the secret of this immortality of Indian Culture—its inner fount ? Well, Friends, after giving the subject my deepest consideration, I have reached the conclusion that that secret is summed up in three words—namely, the *Samañja-satā* (समञ्जसता), the *Sahishñutā* (सहिष्णुता) and the *Grasishñutā* (ग्रसिष्णुता) of Indian Culture—that is to say, its adaptability, its cosmopolitanity (if I may add a new word to the English vocabulary) and its wonderful power of assimilation. Let me explain what I mean. You are all familiar with what the biologists call "the survival of the fittest." According to the Darwinian Theory, there goes on all the time a struggle for existence on this our globe—not only between species and species but among individuals of the same species, and in that struggle, the fittest alone survive by "natural selection," that is to say, those alone survive whose organisms are able to adapt themselves to the changes in the environment, which are happening all the time. Natural selection, then, explains the fixation of species, the non-persistence of the on-adapted, of what are called the misfits—and the the survival of the well-adapted or fit. It is thus quite obvious that a species or an individual

would disappear, should it or he fail to bend to the changing conditions of existence that are imposed on it or him. In other words, only those organisms are able to survive which have the power of adjusting themselves to their changing environments.

It has been well observed that the higher the standing of an animal in the scale of evolution, the greater is his adaptability to his environment ; for instance, a polar bear, transferred to the torrid zones, will die ; but take a civilized man to the arctic regions, he will contrive to adapt himself to his changed environment and so survive. This explains in part the secret of what I am speaking of as the "Immortality" of Indian Culture. It has survived, inspite of the violent changes which took place from time to time in its environment, to which its remarkable adaptability enabled it to adjust itself. Adverse comments have sometimes been made regarding the changes which have happened, during its long life, in Indian conditions of existence and generally in Indian Culture—from the misty and remote Vedic age to the present day of twentieth century civilization, so-called. But, throughout this immense period, though Indian Culture from age to age adjusted itself to its varying environments by effecting changes in its outer *form*, its *life*—what I have called its "Soul"—has remained one and indetical.

Allied to this *Samañjasatā* (adaptability) is what I call the *Sahishñutā* of Indian Culture—its

cosmopolitanity, its catholic tolerance (*Titikshā*) of all races, religions, customs and cultures. It accepts all things and rejects nothing\*—"कुतो न विजुगुप्सते" '*Kuto na vijugupsate.*'

Some time ago, Āchāryya J. B. Kripalani published an interesting article, headed "The Genius of India." It was written half in jest, half in earnest; but the underlying idea was quite sound. Mr. Kripalani remarked that the Indian nation preserves everything and discards nothing. "Nothing" (I am quoting his own words) "is disturbed, nothing is destroyed, nothing disappears. New sets of rules, new customs, new ideas, new fashions, new creeds, new philosophies, new arts and styles appear; but all the old ones (and I lay stress on this fact) remain in some form or other." Mr. Kripalani gives some amusing illustrations to support his thesis—"Our food and dress (he notes) have been changing in every epoch of our history." We have our "*ḍāl-bhāt*" and "*roṭi*," then we have our *Kichri*, mentioned by Al'barouni; we have the fashions of food introduced by the Pathan, the Mughal and the Turk, the *Pulao*, the *Kurma* and the *Kābāb*. Recently, we are having all the chops, cutlets, puddings and pies of our Western masters. All these fashions in food co-exist (and

\* That is why, for instance in ancient India, so many as eight forms of marriage and twelve varieties of sonship were recognised and given legal sanction.

this is what is remarkable) in amity, without raising any communal question; and sometimes on the same table. Then all the *modes* of eating co-exist, from the most *primaeva* of eating with the hands. We have our plantain leaf and other leafy plates. Then we have our clay pots and metal pots and also the Muslim *lotā* and the modern porcelain crockery. All these pots and pans, spoons, knives and forks, Mr. Kripalani points out, live side by side in peace, without colliding against each other and injuring themselves. Even in such a simple thing as smoking, we have intact all the possible fashions, ever invented or ever introduced from abroad, so that “hookās,” “chilams,” “farshis,” and “fateh pashes” live side by side with the *bidi*, the cigarette, the cigar and the pipe. They have all their addicts and admirers. Mr. Kripalani goes on :—

“To be brief, there is no style in art, architecture, painting, music, dance, which is not represented in this strange land. All the tongues that were ever spoken are in vogue somewhere or other. All the scripts ever written exist even to-day. All the faiths that have ever united or divided men and women are represented. All the worships people ever performed through fear, greed and hope or through love have their votaries. All *modes* of thought and philosophy, from the most ancient Vedas, Kapila, Chārvāka,

and its modern counterparts of Dialectical Materialism exist in this land. In family life, there are the matriarchal and the patriarchal systems; many wives to a husband and as many husbands to a wife. Marriage is a sacrament, also a contract, dissolvable at will. Personal laws of all varieties co-exist side by side. The old caste system is there. The four castes have increased to four thousand. A caste once created has never disappeared, Added to these castes, are the classes."

Coming to organisations (and their name, we know, is legion), he says, the number is on the increase and that once born they never die. None is disturbed by the change of time; none is destroyed; none ever disappears from the stage, and he is able to reach the truth I am hammering here, *viz.*, that the genius of the land is for conservation and preservation and not for destruction or elimination. "Live and let live" is the rule, and thus to achieve a kind of immortality is the true genius of this ancient and glorious land. "India lives," he concludes, "and shall continue to live as long as it sticks to this inner urge of its being—to preserve everything and to destroy nothing." That is why, I may point out, Indian Culture has tolerance for every opinion and practice, whether it be the fetishism of the savage, the idolatry of the semi-civilized, the church-going



of the civilized or the contemplation of the “uncovered Light” by the highly civilized. Thus, unity in variety, oneness in manifoldness—अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु—is the key-note of Indian culture. And unless we grip this its *Samañjasatā* ( समञ्जसता ), its *Udāratā* ( उदारता ), its *Sahishṇutā* ( सहिष्णुता ), its *Sarvaṃsahatā* ( सर्वसहता ), we shall not be able to pluck the heart of its mystery. The watchword of Indian Culture then is concord, not discord—*Samvāda* ( संवाद ), and not *Vivāda* ( विवाद ), “not this alone but this also”—i.e., *Sandhi* ( सन्धि ) and not *Vigraha* ( विग्रह ). To adopt the words of Lord Buddha, “*सेय्युथापि महासमुद्धो—Seyyuthāpi Mahāsamuddo*,” Indian Culture is not only the repository of “full many a gem of purest ray serene” but is oceanic in its catholicity, tolerance and ‘*udātta*’ outlook.

- Let me stop here today. In my next lecture I shall try to support my suggestion with a few illustrations.

## SECOND LECTURE

FRIENDS,

In my first lecture, after speaking of the immortality, the *Mṛtyuñjayatā*, of Indian Culture, I suggested that the key-note of that culture was its *Udāratā*, its *Sahishṇutā*, its *Sarvaṃsahatā*, and that it was not only the repository of 'full many a gem of purest ray serene' but was oceanic in its catholicity, tolerance and 'udātta' outlook. So it is right to think of Indian Culture as a rare reconciliator—as a sublime unity of many contraries. Let me begin by giving you a few illustrations; but I can assure you that the topic admits of almost infinite expansion. To start with, let us take the very highest Reality—Brahman, called *Satyasya satyam* in the Upanishads.

What is the nature of Brahman? According to the Vedānta, embedded in the Indian culture, Brahman is both a Principle and a Person. He is not only *Tat* (That) but also *Saḥ* (He). He is both *Nirviśeṣa* and *Saviśeṣa*, both *Nirguṇa* and *Saguṇa*—at the same time *Atiga* (अतिग) and *Anuga* (अनुग)—both a Transcendence and an Immanence (*Bahirantaś cha Bhūtānām*), at once static and dynamic, far yet near (*Dūrāt sudūre tad ihāntike cha*), above life and in it, all Love, yet all Law, eternal in essence though working in time,

vaster than the vastest, yet tinier than the tiniest (*Aṇor aṇīyān mahato mahīyān*); in a word, Brahman is the Supreme Unity of all contradictions and thus fully at home in Indian thought. Though *Nirguṇa* and *Nirañjana*, He is yet a Being 'who, closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet,' reveals Himself to the intuition of Man as a wondrous Personality that is beyond all personality—yet a Person of persons, and as a Person (be it noted) He is *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ānanda*—Life, Light and Love; "the Glorious Trinity of Power, Wisdom and Bliss"—*Pratāpa*, *Prajñā* and *Prema*—a Trinity in Unity.

In the face of the manifold Universe, which hits our senses, external or internal, at every moment of time, and which the Vedānta by no means ignores, Vedāntic monism yet assures us that "*Neha nānāsti kīñchana*" \*—"Nowhere is there the least multiplicity." How? Because, Brahman is *Ekaṁ eva a-dvītiyam*—"One without a second." He is a unity but also a unicity, so that not only is there no God but God (*Eka eva Maheśvaraḥ*) but God is all-in-all—*Yasmāt paraṁ nāparam asti kīñchit*. Hence the Vedāntic proclamation, clear, concise and unequivocal—*Sarvaṁ khalu idaṁ Brahma* †—"All this is indeed Brahman."

From this point of view, it is easy to reconcile what is called Polytheism with Monotheism. The Vedānta insists on the rigidest monotheism. At

\* नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन ।

† सर्वं खलु इदं ब्रह्म ।

the same time, it has room for any number of what are called Devas—the archangels, angels, thrones, dominions, seraphim and cherubim of Christian Theology—great functionaries who are in charge of the different departments of Nature and administer them as the vicegerents of God. These are the gods of the Vedic Pantheon and are popularly numbered at thirty-three crores. Some people regard their admission as Polytheism. Others, like Prof. Max Müller, dub it “Henotheism”—each god standing for the time being, in the eye of the worshipper, as unique and supreme. This is, of course, a mistaken view ; because these exalted beings, having unified their consciousness with the Cosmic Consciousness, may well be spoken of as omniscient and omnipotent, as the Vedic R̥shis do. But, is the existence of such intermediate beings between humanity and the Supreme Godhead, merely fanciful? By no means. Hear the weighty words of Prof. Huxley—“Without stepping beyond the analogy of that which is known, it is easy to people the cosmos with entities in ascending scale, until we reach something practically indistinguishable from Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Omniscience.” (Essays upon Some Controverted Questions, p. 36.)

May I in this connection also draw your attention to certain observations of Bulwar Lytton in his “Zanoni” :—

“Reasoning then by evident analogy,—  
if not a leaf, if not a drop of water, but is

no less than yonder star, a habitable and breathing world, . . . common sense would suffice to teach that the circumfluent infinite which you call space—the boundless impalpable which divides earth from the moon and stars—is filled also with its correspondent and appropriate life. Is it not a visible absurdity to suppose that being is crowded upon every leaf and yet absent from the immensities of space? . . . The microscope shews you the creatures on the leaf ; no mechanical tube is yet invented to discover the nobler and more gifted things that hover in the illimitable air.” (Zanoni, Book IV, Chap. IV.)

The Vedānta tells us that at the head of each world-system stands the Logos of that system, spoken of as *Prajāpati* and sometimes as *Īśvara* of the system. We are taught that there are millions of trillions of such world-systems.

*Samkhyā ched rajasām asti viśvānām na kadāchana*\*—so that, it would be easier far to count up the grains of sand on the sea-shore than the universes, which are whirling through space ; and that, each system is ensouled by its own *Īśvara*. These are really subordinate gods, working under the one Supreme Logos, the *Maheśvara*, the

\* संख्या चेद् रजसामस्ति विश्वानां न कदाचन ।

*Paramēśvara*, the *Viśveśvara*, Who is the *Īśvara* of the *Īśvaras*, the Lord of the lords of creation :—

Tam Īśvarāṇaṃ paramaṃ Maheśvaraṃ

Tam devatānāṃ paramaṃ hi daivatam.

—*Śvetāśvatara*\*

Thus, then, Polytheism and Monotheism are harmonised and reconciled in Indian Culture. Did not I say it was a great reconciliator?

While conceding the relative or derivative reality of the Universe, the Vedānta, in the same breath, declares, that, having emanated the Universe out of Himself, Brahman entered into it as the inner self.

Tat sṛṣṭvā tadeva anuprāvishat.†

So it is said—He made Himself like unto the Ether and pervaded the Universe. As a razor in the sheath, He is immanent in the Universe—or as the Sufi phrases it :—

“His secret presence through creation’s veins  
Runs quicksilver-like and eludes our pains.”

Notwithstanding that Brahman pervades the Universe as immanent Deity, He remains~the

\* तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वरं

तं देवतानां परमं हि दैवतम् । —श्वेताश्वतर ।

† तत् सृष्ट्वा तदेव अनुप्राविशत् ।

Over-soul, the Transcendent God, and as early as the R̥gveda, the R̥shi declared :—

Pādo'sya viśvā bhūtāni  
Tripād asyāmṛtaṃ divi. \*

“ One quarter of Him are all these (mortal) creatures ; the remaining three quarters are immortal in super-space.”

From this immanence of God, follows, as an unescapable corollary, the solidarity of man. We are all rooted in the One Life, are fragments of the Divine effulgence and are verily “ Sons of Immortality ” :—

Śṁvantu viśve amṛtasya puttrāḥ ! †

And though all men are born unequal (and Indian Culture unequivocally repudiates the claptrap of equality), yet in its view the lowest *is* the highest. So the R̥shis declare :—

Brahma dāsāḥ Brahma kitavāḥ. ‡

“ Brahman is in the slave, Brahman is in the sinner ”—for, is not every man and woman, whatever the colour of his or her skin or social status, the tabernacle of God, in whom the Highest dwelleth, as a matter of sober fact ?

\* पादोऽस्य विश्वा भूतानि त्रिपाद अस्यामृतं दिवि ।

† शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्राः ।

‡ ब्रह्म दासाः ब्रह्म कितवाः ।

Deho devālayaḥ prokto  
Yo jivaḥ sa sadāśivaḥ. \*

That, then, is the straight solution of the Pariah problem, about which so much pother is being made in these latter days by Sanātanists and Reformers alike. Have we not been assured by no less an authority than the great Śuka in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa :

“ Salute in a reverent spirit all these creatures, with respect in your heart, for the Supreme abides in each one of them.”

Manasaitāni bhūtāni praṇamed bahumānayan  
Īśvaro jivakalayā praviṣṭo Bhagavān iti. †

Again :—

Praṇamed daṇḍavad bhūmau  
Āśva-chaṇḍāla-go-kharam. ‡

“ Therefore prostrate yourself on the earth before dogs, cows, asses, etc., as well as chaṇḍālas.” For by so doing, you are reverencing the Divine Life imprisoned in those bodies, and you should regard true service, whether rendered to man or beast, to the highest or to the lowest, not as grudging, stooping condescension of the high and lofty for the lowly and the suppressed, but as gladsome *Sevā*

❧ देहो देवालयः प्रोक्तो यो जीवः स सदाशिवः ।

† मनसैतानि भूतानि प्रणमेद् बहुमानयन् ।

‡ श्वरो जीवकलया प्रविष्टो भगवानिति ॥

❧ प्रणमेद् दण्डवद् भूमी आ-श्व-चण्डालि-गो-खरम् ।



rendered in order to release the possibilities of self-revelation of that imprisoned Life in our younger brothers.

Keeping in view then the inborn inequality of human beings, who occupy, as a matter of fact, different rungs in the ladder of evolution, and at the same time not losing sight of their *potential* equality—Indian Culture, in the person of Vaivasvata Manu, the Patriarch of the Aryan race, devised the wonderful system of *Varṇāśrama Dharma* which, in its obscuration and degeneration in later times, has been the target of so much abuse and ridicule from myopic Westerners. The fact, however, remains that this system was practised in India for ages with conspicuous success, to which testimony is borne by Megasthenes, the Greek Ambassador to Chandragupta's Court in 306-298 B.C. Let me quote from McCrindle's "Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian,"—"Megasthenes has left a life-like picture of the Indian people. . . . . The Greek Ambassador observed with admiration the absence of slavery in India, the chastity of the women and the courage of the men. In valour they excelled all other Asiatics ; they required no locks to their doors ; above all, no Indian was ever known to tell a lie. Sober and industrious, good farmers and skilled artisans, they scarcely ever had recourse to a lawsuit and lived peaceably under their native chiefs. The kingly government is portrayed almost as described in Marfu." . . . Professor Deussen, who

visited India in the last decade of the 19th century and who was a keen observer of facts as he found them, writing in the "Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics," says, "In our opinion the whole history of mankind has not much that equals the grandeur of this thought."

I am not going into a detailed exposition of the Varṇāśrama Dharma, about which I have a great deal to say, but will content myself with quoting the weighty opinion of Dr. Bhagwan Das of Benares, who has devoted about thirty years of his life to a close and careful study of this whole subject.

"The system," he says, "lays down right *principles* of a healthy, all-comprehending, truly scientific individuo-social organisation." "It is a system," he goes on, "in which Individualism and Socialism are duly combined and balanced, in which the life of each individual and the life of Society as a whole are both organised and interwoven as warp and woof, to subserve clearly visualised aims of life, ministering to the just interests of all sections of the people, of all temperaments of individuals, of all the successive main 'ages' in each life-time, diligently seeking to ensure general welfare and deliberately planned to provide *spiritual* as well as *material bread* in appropriate quality and measure to all and each." Thus, the system is at once complete, composite, consistent and cosmopolitan—for, according to this scheme, Society is rightly organised by the distinguishing

and the articulating together of the four *Varṇas*—"Colours," not Castes—the four main professions named, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaiśyas* and *Sūdras*, viz., the Learned, the Executive, the Commercial and the Labour profession who are the *Śikṣhaḥ* ( शिक्षक's ), the *Rakṣhaḥ* ( रक्षक's ), the *Pālakaḥ* ( पालक's ) and the *Dhāraḥ* ( धारक's ) of the social organisation.\*

I shall not dilate on this at present, but propose to say something later about these four *Varṇas*.

Take another topic :

You are familiar with the two paths, the path of gratification and the path of renunciation—*Preyaḥ* ( प्रेयः ) and *Śreyaḥ* ( श्रेयः ), the path of *Bhava* ( भव ) and the path of *Vraja* ( व्रज )—what the Lord Buddha spoke of as—

*Añña lābhopanishā añña Nibbāṇagāmiṇi*. †

One is the path of naturalism and the other of asceticism—the primrose path and the path of thorns. Western culture has set up impassable barriers between the two paths; and has not been

\* See Dr. Bhagwan Das's "Science of the Self" and "Science of Social Organisation."

† अज्झी लामोपनिषा अज्जा निब्बाण-गामिणी ।

able to harmonise them, so that they have remained

*Dūramete viparīte vishūchi.\**

The result has been most woeful. Let me in this connexion cite the testimony of an acute observer like John Stuart Mill. He wrote thus in his "Liberty" (Chap. 2):—

"To what an extent, doctrines intrinsically fitted to make the deepest impression upon the mind, may remain in it as dead beliefs, without being ever realised in the imagination, the feeling, or the understanding, is exemplified by the manner in which the majority of believers hold the doctrines of Christianity. By Christianity, I here mean what is accounted as such by all churches and sects, the maxims and precepts contained in the New Testament. These are considered sacred and accepted as laws, by all professing Christians. Yet it is scarcely too much to say that not one Christian in a thousand guides or tests his individual conduct by reference to those laws. The standard to which he does refer it, is the custom of his nation, class or religious profession. He has thus on the one hand, a collection of ethical maxims which he believes to have been vouchsafed to him by infallible wisdom as rules for his government, and on the other, a set of everyday judgments and practices which go a certain length with some of

those maxims, not so great a length with others, stand in direct opposition to some, and are on the whole a compromise between the Christian creed and the interests and suggestions of worldly life. To the first of these standards he gives his homage; to the other his real allegiance. All Christians believe that blessed are the poor and humble and those who are ill-used by the world; that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven; that they should judge not, lest they be judged; that they should love their neighbours as themselves; that if one take their cloak, they should give him their coat also; that they should take no thought for the morrow; that if they should be perfect, they should sell all that they have and give it to the poor. They are not insincere when they say that they believe these things. They do believe them, as people believe what they have always heard lauded and never discussed. But in the sense of that living belief which regulates conduct, they believe those doctrines just up to the point to which it is usual to act upon them."

You can well appreciate that if the high ethics of the New Testament (which Jesus Christ enunciated for his immediate disciples—for saint-souls in contact with God, that is, for "regenerate" persons in what we in this country call the *Sannyāsa* stage of life) are preached to or attempted to be practised by the man of the world, it is bound to result

in abject failure. To show that matters have not improved at all since the days of John Stuart Mill, let me quote the testimony of another Western writer, Lowes Dickinson, a Cambridge don, who contributed some remarkable letters, about the time of the Boxer trouble in China, under the pseudonym of 'John Chinaman.' These are his words—"Those who profess Christianity, and there are few who in one way or another do not, profess it only with their lips and, having in this way satisfied the claims of the Ideal, turn back with an unencumbered mind and conscience to the pursuit of egoistic ends. . . . No wonder your history (he is speaking as a Chinaman) has been one long and lamentable tale of antagonism, tumult, carnage and confusion ! No wonder the spiritual and temporal powers have oscillated between open war and truces, as discreditable to the one as to the other ! . . . Trained in the tenets of a religion in which he does not really believe, his (the ordinary Christian's) religion is conventional, and what is more important, his morals are as conventional as his creed. Charity, chastity, self-abnegation, contempt for the world and its prizes—these are words on which he has been fed from his childhood upwards. And words they have remained, for he has neither anywhere seen them practised by others, nor has it ever occurred to him to practise them himself. Their influence, while it is strong enough to make him a chronic hypocrite, is not so strong as to show him the hypocrite

he is." If you are in search of further testimony, I would refer you to Lecky's "History of European Morals."

How has the thing been worked out by Indian Culture? It has frankly recognised that the great circle of evolution on which the pilgrim-soul wanders from æon to æon, starting from God and returning to God :—

“ For, man who is from God sent forth,  
Doth again to God return.”

*Wordsworth*

—that this *Brahma-Chakra* (ब्रह्मचक्र) has two arcs—the *Pravṛtti-Mārga* and the *Nivṛtti-Mārga*—the arc of pursuit and the arc of renunciation. In the first half-circle, the *Jīva* grows by grasping (*Ādāna*); in the second half of the circle, he grows by giving (*Pradāna*). In the first half-circle, the face of the *jīva* is turned away from God (*Vaimukhya*); then, there is the turning point, the midmost point of balance,—the point at or about which the majority of human egos are stationed at the present moment,—at this point the circle turns upwards towards God. Now there is not *Vaimukhya* but *Sāmmukhya*. That being so, and individual *jīvas* being stationed at different points of evolution, the law of growth cannot be alike for all. In a word, what is meat for men is poison for babes, and *vice versa*. Therefore, different standards have to be prescribed for different

sets of egos. For the man of the world the rule is :—

Dharmārthakāmāḥ samameva sevyāḥ  
Yo hyekasaktaḥ sa jano jaghanyaḥ.\*

For him, pleasure and profit (*Kāma* and *Artha*) are motive-forces which cannot be disregarded. But what is necessary is that their pursuit should not be divorced from righteousness and should be controlled by *Dharma*. For sage-souls and saint-souls, who have entered the path of renunciation and have progressed on the *Nivṛtti-Mārga*, not enjoyment but renunciation is the law of life; because not *Kāma*, *Artha* or even *Dharma* is his objective, but *Mokṣha*—liberation, at-one-ment with God. And necessarily, the high ethics of the New Testament, which by the way is fully in accord with those of the Upanishads, is the guiding star by which the Sannyāsi who has renounced the worldly life steers his barque on the stormy ocean of *Samsāra*. This, then, is how Indian Culture harmonizes *Bhoga* and *Tyāga*—asceticism and naturalism.

Connected with this cosmopolitanity, which I have been discussing, is what I have called the “*Grasishṇutā*” ( ग्रसिष्णुता ) of Indian Culture, its

धर्मार्थकामाः सममेव सेव्या

यो ह्येकसक्ताः स जनो जगन्धः ।



wonderful power of assimilation. I had something to say about it in my first lecture. What I want to draw attention to is that, whatever culture it came into contact with, in its long past—and it did come into contact with very many cultures, whether Dravidian, Sumerian, Iranian, Turanian, Mongolian, Scythian, Chinese or Hellenese—Indian Culture was able to assimilate it by establishing a sort of cultural “osmosis,” thereby becoming richer and fuller. Not only cultures but it was able to affiliate to itself whole populations. I am referring to the *Śākadvīpī* Brāhmaṇas and the *Agnikūla* Kshatriyas of Rajputana and particularly to the *Chitpāvans* of Konkan on the west coast of India, with their fairly dark complexion and cat’s eyes (a remarkable combination)—the clan from which came Ranade, Tilak, Kelkar and Gokhale. Looking at these specimens at close quarters, I have often reflected on their ethnic origin and realised how wonderful was this *Grasishṇutā* ( ग्रसिष्णुता ) of Indian Culture, which enabled it to make these rank foreigners part and parcel of the Indian nation.

Apart from this excursion into ethnology and confining myself to the question of culture itself, let me give you two or three illustrations, to bring home to your minds this power of assimilation (what I may call *Ātmasāt*) possessed by Indian Culture.

First, take the impact of Hellenic culture in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era.

Though extremists among Orientalists were wont to suggest in my youth that our ancient Epic, the Rāmāyaṇa, was simply an imitation of Homer's Iliad, which of course is supremely silly, there cannot be any manner of doubt (as you can realise if you visit the Archaeological Museum at Taxila) that Greek Architecture left an abiding mark on Indian Architecture, as may be seen in the remnants of the Gāndhāra School of Art. Not only that, but it is also permissible to suggest, as some have done, that the statuesque beauty of Kālidāsa's poetry and the stately march of Bāṇabhaṭṭa's prose owe something to Greek influence.

As to Islamic culture, with which our contact was longer and more intimate, who can fail to detect its influence in the Rajput School of Painting and in the introduction of new tones and undertones and of mixed *rāgas* and *rāgiṇīs* in the music of Tansen and his followers, who grafted these on the old Indian music and thereby improved it. And how the massive monuments, august and austere, of Indian architecture were softened by the delicate artistry of the Taj and the Dilwārā. So that, it is no exaggeration to say, as pointed out by Mr. Asaf A. A. Fyzee, in a readable article contributed to the "Times of India" Annual for 1940, that Indian Culture is richer and more complex today by the impact of Islamic culture. At the same time, it cannot escape notice that, all the time and in spite of these repeated assimilations, Indian Culture was never engulfed, as were Iranian and

Egyptian cultures ; it never lost its soul, but was able to retain its own uniqueness, its individual characteristics.

The same phenomenon is now going on before our very eyes with regard to European culture, which assailed us in rather an aggressive form, after the battle of Plassey was fought and won. As I have pointed out elsewhere, this foreign culture which made its first insidious entry into India in the wake of trade and commerce—while it (in the words of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore) undoubtedly stirred India with new freedom and awoke its intellectual mind from age-long hibernation to full splendour\*—at the same time, struck at the *very vitals* of Indian Culture. At first it seemed that it would swamp Indian Culture and drown it in its mighty waves of de-nationalization, leaving no traces behind. But, what I have called the *Virāt Bubhukṣhā* ( विराट् बुभुक्षा ), the all-devouring *Grasishṇuta* ( ग्रसिष्णुता ) of Indian Culture, again saved the situation—and Indian Culture once

\* It should not be lost sight of that this weakening of the old religious and social traditions reacted in the shape of anarchism both in the fields of religion and society, so that, along with the shedding of social and religious fetters and superstitions, came atheism and materialism on one side and license and *Yathechchhāchāra* ( यथेच्छाचार ) on the other. See Raj Narain Basu's "*Ekāl-o-Sekāl*" ( एकाल ओ सेकाल ) and Madhusudan's "*Ekēi kī vale sabhyatā*" ( एकेइ कि बले सभ्यता ? ).

again, as in the past, re-established itself on its own ancient pedestal, richer, fuller and better, more virile and vigorous for its impact with and assimilation of this foreign culture. So that Dr. Arundale, the President of the Theosophical Society, was right, when he lately pointed out in his weekly journal, "Conscience," that India is in the magnificent situation of having at her disposal many cultures, each one different and no less beautiful than the other. And what is still more magnificent is that Indian Culture has kept and is keeping fraternal relationship with each and all of these diverse and distinct cultures. As the present Vice-Chancellor of this University said the other day, "The Almighty in His dispensation has brought together within the four corners of this country, the great cultures of the East and the West . . . Streams of humanity have come as foreigners and made this land their own. Waves of various conquests *cum* cultures have come across the seas and these have vitalised the culture of India. The culture of India today is neither the gift nor the possession of only one class or one section, but is the proud privilege of all." This then is the *Apūrvatā* (अपूर्वता), the *Ājavatā* (आजवता), the uniqueness of Indian Culture—as it is embodied in religion, philosophy, social organisation, political institutions, and literature and arts. About this I propose to say something more in my next two lectures.

## THIRD LECTURE

FRIENDS,

If I may remind you, the general title of this my Lecture-series is "Indian Culture : Its Strands and Trends" (A Study in Contrasts). In my first two lectures, I have attempted, however sketchily, to bring home to you some of the *strands* of Indian Culture. In my sixth and last lecture I shall try to discuss its *trends*, which will involve the question of its future destiny. I propose to devote this and the next two lectures to a study of the contrasts between Indian Culture and some other cultures, ancient and modern. By reason of the shortness of time at my disposal and, particularly, of my own limitations, my treatment of the theme is bound to be partial and inadequate. Nevertheless, let me try and do the best I can.

I shall first deal with Religion, which, in my view, is the most vital factor of a nation's culture. Let us take the religion of ancient Greece as we find it portrayed in Homer's Iliad—probably the oldest Greek record extant, and contrast it with the ancient Indian religion as we know of it from the Vedas and the Upanishads.

At the head of the divine hierarchy in the Grecian religion, stands Zeus, Olympian Jove, the lightning-wielder, the cloud-compeller, the Universal Lord of gods and men, over whom His power is pre-eminent. He is the eldest-born of 'deep designing' Saturn, whom he has deposed and hurled down to 'Tartarus profound beneath the lowest deep of earth and ocean, where Saturn, the Sire, abides' uncheered by a ray of the sun or a breath of air. This Zeus has the 'golden-throned' Juno, his own sister, as his wife and queen. (By the way, the primitive Greeks seem to have entertained rather advanced ideas on the subject of mating, both among gods and men. For instance, we find in Sophocles that the king of Athens takes to wife Antigone, the daughter of Œdipus, born of his unconscious incest with his own mother, which fact came to light in due course and was well-known all over Greece when this marriage took place.)

Well, in the very first book of the Iliad (I take it that you are familiar with the story of the Trojan War, and know how the brass-clad Greeks and the brave Trojans grappled with each other for ten long years, until Troy fell by a stratagem)—as I was saying, in the very first book of the Iliad, we meet this Olympian Jove as well as his 'fair-haired' consort. Achilles and Agamemnon (who was the generalissimo of the Grecian hosts) have quarrelled over a girl, and Agamemnon having 'cast a slight on Grecia's bravest warrior,'

Achilles, in revenge, has withdrawn in sulk from the conflict to his tents and ships, and we find him seated upon 'the margin of the hoary sea, gazing idly on the dark blue waves' and praying to his goddess-mother Thetis that she might intervene with Olympian Jove and wreak destruction on the assembled Greeks; so Thetis comes to him and at his request proceeds to Saturn's cloud-girt son in many-ridged Olympus. She finds him sitting apart upon its topmost crest. Thetis sits at his feet and, while her left hand clasps his knees, her right hand approaches his beard. She supplicates Zeus to avenge her son's cause and give to Trojan arms such strength and power that the Greeks might learn how much they need her son and thus give Achilles honour due. Jove, thus persuaded, promises to do the needful and confirms this with a nod, for never (we are told) 'shall his promise deceive or fail or be recalled, if with a nod confirmed.' And as he nodded with his shadowy brows—

“Waved on the immortal head, the ambrosial  
locks  
And all Olympus trembled at his nod.”

But this secret parley has not escaped the observant eyes of Juno; and the stag-eyed Queen of Heaven rebukes Zeus that he should be weaving his secret schemes apart from her. To her the cloud-compeller thus replies: It is his

sovereign will, and the queen must keep silence and his words obey :—

“ Lest all the immortals fail, if I be wroth,  
To rescue thee from my resistless hand.”\*

And no wonder, when so admonished ‘terror seized the stag-eyed queen, and silent she sat curbing her spirit down.’

To give you a fuller idea of the nature of this supreme God of the Greeks (who, no doubt, is *Devendra* but is endowed with all the faults and foibles of erring humanity), let us look at another vignette from the domestic drama of this immortal pair. The Greeks are being overborne in battle by the brave Trojans, headed by Hector. None of those gods who are on the side of the Greeks dare to interfere, for, Jove, in the exercise of his sovereign will, has interdicted such interference. Juno, who is heart and soul with the Greeks, observes their plight with pitying eyes and hits upon a stratagem—to beguile the wakeful mind of ægis-bearing Jove. The stratagem is that she should repair to Ida, from whose height Jove

\* By the way, I am using the Earl of Derby’s blank verse translation of Homer’s *Iliad*, which, so far as I know, is the best in the English language. Pope’s Homer’s *Iliad*, in spite of its mellifluous versification, is hardly Homer. As a friend told Pope, when the translation was first published, “Mr. Pope, it is a good poem, but it is not Homer.”



was watching the war on the plains of Troy, and—

“ There with fondest blandishment  
And female charm, her husband to enfold  
In love’s embrace ; and gentle, careless sleep  
Around his eyelids and his senses pour.”

So, by making up a false story, the queen persuades her step-daughter Venus to part with her “ broidered cestus, wrought with every charm to win the heart ” and, by a specious promise (which I am sure, she never meant to keep) having secured the aid of the gentle god of sleep, she speeds to Ida’s summit, to Gargerus. Jove sees her—

“ And sudden passion fir’d his soul,  
As when, their parents’ eyes eluding, first  
• They tasted of the secret joys of love.”

Juno pretends that she is bound on an errand and so is in a hurry ; but the cloud-compeller detains her with these sweet words, recapitulating to his spouse some of his many sexual escapades in the past :—

“ Juno ! thy visit yet a while defer ;  
And let us now in love’s delights indulge :  
For never yet did such a flood of love  
For Goddess or for mortal fill my soul ;  
Not for Ixion’s beauteous wife, who bore  
Pirithous, sage in council as the Gods,

Nor the neat-footed maiden Danae,  
Acrisius' daughter, her who Perseus bore,  
The observed of all ; nor noble Phoenix' child,  
Who bore me Minos, and the godlike might  
Of Rhadamanthus ; nor for Semele,  
Nor for Alcmene fair, of whom was born  
In Thebes the mighty warrior Hercules,  
As Bacchus, joy of men, of Semele :  
No, nor for Ceres, golden-tressed queen,  
Nor for Latona bright, nor for thyself,  
As now with fond desire for thee I burn."

Juno pretends to yield, and the cloud-compeller, to elude the eyes of gods and men, throws round them such a veil of golden cloud, that ' not the sun himself, with sharpest beam of light, might pierce it through.' So—

" By sleep and love subdued, the immortal Sire  
Clasped in his arms his wife, reposed in peace."

The eyes of all-seeing Jove being thus closed by sleep, the Gods, who were on the watch for an opportunity to aid the Greeks, were enabled so to work their will as to turn the tide of battle in their favour. But we are not concerned here with that part of the story. Let us hear what took place when Jove awoke on Ida's height at the side of golden-throned Juno, and his eyes beheld the Trojans in confusion, being pressed

“ This, Juno, is thy work ; thy wicked wiles  
Have Hector quelled and Trojans driven to  
flight.  
Nor know I but thyself mayst reap the fruit,  
By shameful scourging, of thy vile deceit.”

The story of the Iliad inevitably reminds one of the story of the Rāmāyaṇa. Yet, what a contrast between the blameless heroine Sītā and by her side the heroic Śrī Rāma and the self-contained Lakshmaṇa on the one hand, and, on the other, Helen with her free and easy manners and by her side her husband, the uxorious Menelaus, who is anxious to take back Helen, though she has in the meantime passed twenty long years in Troy as Paris's putative wife, and Menelaus' brother Agamemnon with his elemental passions !

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Purusha evedaṃ sarvaṃ, yat bhūtam yachcha bhavyam.\*

‘The Purusha is all this—all that is past, is now and will be in the future’—Who is unseeable, unutterable, unfathomable, unrealisable—*Adṛśyam, Anātmyam, Anirukṭam, Anilayanam*†—Who is the sole reality—the one Universal Principle of unity behind diversity, conflict and confusion, the एकमेवाद्वितीयम्—*Ekamevādvītiyam*—what I have spoken of elsewhere as the *Akhaṇḍa* amidst *Khaṇḍa*, the *A-vibhakṭa* in the midst of *Vibhakṭa*, the *Samashṭi* piecing together the *Vyashṭis*, the *Sāmānya* in the midst of *Viśiṣṭa*, the *Sāmañjasya* ( सामञ्जस्य ) subsuming all the *virodhas*—

Sa evādhastāt Sa uparishṭāt Sa paśchāt

Sa purastāt,

Sa dakṣhiṇataḥ Sa uttārataḥ Sa evedaṃ

sarvaṃ iti.

—Chhāndogya.‡

“He is above ; He is below ; He is before ; He is behind ; He is to the south, He is to the North, nay, everything is He ”—that is to say, there is nothing beside or beyond Him.

\* पुरुष एवेदं सर्वं यत् भूतम् यच्च भव्यम् ।

† अदृश्यम् अनात्म्यम् अनिरुक्तम् अनिलयनम् ।

—Taittirīya Upanishad.

‡ स एवाधस्तात् स उपरिष्ठात् स पश्चात् स पुरस्तात्

स दक्षिणतः स उत्तरतः स एवेदं सर्वमिति ।

This is the pure *Advaita* position, which tackles the problem of Duality in a twofold fashion—first, by asserting that the Universe exists, *as it were*—यत्र हि द्वैतम् इव भवति—*Yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati*,—that multiplicity, *Dvaita*, duality, is only *Māyā*; and secondly, by suggesting that the external world with its manifoldness, if rightly analysed, is seen to be a mere mode of manifestation of the Absolute,—His *Vidhā* (विधा) or *Prakāra* (प्रकार). At the moment we are not concerned with *Māyā-Vāda*. So, let us concentrate for a minute on the teaching of the Vedānta, which speaks of matter and energy, the ultimate duality to which the manifold universe is resolvable, as the two poles of the One Existence, which before manifestation, remain locked into each other, like, as we might say, the neutral magnetism of the soft iron, which breaks up into positive and negative when acted upon by the will-to-manifest of the One : *Eko'ham bahu syām prajāyeya* (एकोऽहं बहु स्यां प्रजायेय), etc.

This is also the meaning of the illustration in *Bṛhad.*, 2.4.7-9, where it is said that *Ātman* is the musical instrument (drum, conch, lyre) and the phenomena of the Universe are its notes. Just as the notes can only be seized when the instrument is seized, so the world of plurality is known when the *Ātman* is known.

I am aware that, in later times, the Greeks were able to discover this universal Principle, which subsequent thinkers in the West have designated “the Supreme Divine *Ens*” (using the Latin word).

But I am bound to say that the notions of the earlier Greeks were rather vague and nebulous. For instance, they had no clear conception of what the Vedānta speaks of as *Para-Brahman*—a stage of consciousness existing under conditions so very complex as practically to neutralise all its inherent activities—a stage which, in the words of Lord Balfour, might perhaps be best described as “Consciousness at its functional Zero.” To explain my meaning, may I quote the words of a discerning Westerner—“For purposes of so-called creation, the Para-Brahman, by an eternal act of voluntary self-sacrifice, subjects itself to conditions and limitations of time, space and causality, what are called देश, काल and निमित्त, though, by a logically subsequent act, it also throws those conditions and limitations off, thus recognising itself what it really is—the Supreme Divine *Ens*.”

The later Greeks also spoke of “Theophany” —‘Seeing God everywhere,’ but I am inclined to believe that they never developed that living sense of God with Whom, in the words of Browning, ‘every bush is afire,’ as the Hindus did, when, for instance, it is said in the Gītā :—

Bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām

prapadyatē

Vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ.\*

\* बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते ।

वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥

—or, when the *Vaiṣṇavas*, speaking of Śrī Rādhā, characterise her as—

Kṛṣṇamayī Kṛṣṇa yār bhitare vāhire,  
Yānhā yānhā netra paḍe tānhā Kṛṣṇa sphure.\*

Returning to the Iliad for a moment and reminding you of the Hellenese Overlord, Jupiter, may I, as a study in contrast, relate to you the story of Umā Haimavatī as given in the *Kena Upanishad* ? The story begins—ब्रह्म ह देवेभ्यो विजिग्ये—*Brahma ha devebhyo vijigye*—‘Brahma had given victory to the Devas.’ But, they in their arrogance, thought that the victory had been achieved by their own prowess.—*Asmākaṁ evāyaṁ vijayaḥ asmākaṁ evāyaṁ mahimā*.†

To dispel this illusion, Brahman appeared before them clothed in a strange *Māyāvic* form. They could not make out what it was—*Tanna vyajānanta kimidaṁ yakṣhamiti*.‡

So they sent out the fire-god, Agni, to find out. Agni having approached that *Yakṣha*, the latter questioned him—“What art thou?” Agni in his pride replied, “You don’t know my power? I can burn up everything in the Universe.” “Can you? Try”; and he laid before Agni a tiny blade

\* कृष्णमयी कृष्ण यार भितरे वाहिरै ।

याँहा याँहा नेत्र पड़े ताँहा कृष्ण स्फुरै ॥

† अस्माकमेवायं विजयः अस्माकमेवायं महिमा ।

‡ तन्न व्यजानन्त किमिदं यक्षमिति ।

of grass. Agni tried to burn it with all his might, but failed. So he returned, baffled. The Gods then sent the storm-god, Vāyu. He also met with a similar fate. Being questioned, he said, “ I am Vāyu, I am Mātariśvā. I can dry up all that is in the Universe.” “ Can you, my friend? Try ” ; and another tiny blade of grass was laid before him. Vāyu tried with all his might to move it but failed, and he also returned, baffled. Then the Devas sent out their chief, Indra, to find out. At his approach, that strange being disappeared from sight, and Indra saw in the sky a bewitching maiden—*Striyam ājagāma bahuśobhamānām Umām Haimavatīm*, \* who was no other than the Divine Wisdom, whom the Greeks called “ Sophia.” When questioned by Indra about that strange entity, she explained that He was no other than the Supreme Being, Who was the fount of all power, wisdom and majesty. It was He who had given victory to the Devas. Then it was that the illusion of the gods was pierced. So it is said in another passage in the Upanishads—*Yo vai Bālāka ! eteshāṃ devatānāṃ karta, yasya vai tat karma sa vai veditavyaḥ*.†

“ These devas are but creatures emanated from Brahman, the One and only One.”

\* स्त्रियम् आजगाम बहुशोभमानाम् उमाम् हैमवतीम् ।

† यो वै बालाक ! एतेषां देवतानां कर्ता, यस्य वै तत् कर्म स वै वेदितव्यः ।



You know, in classical Rome, there was current the story of the belly and the other members of the body—how a Roman patriarch used this story to quell a riot that was about to break out in the city of Rome between the Patricians and the Plebians. He related that once upon a time the organs of the human body had quarrelled with each other: their special quarrel was with the belly, the supposedly idle organ, which only rested and took advantage of the labours of the other organs—hands, feet, eyes, ears, etc. So, they resolved to non-co-operate with him. What was the result? They themselves suffered grievously, and for want of sustenance, which the belly naturally ceased to supply, they shrivelled up, and the Roman patriarch pointed out the obvious moral. We have an older story in the Upanishads about a quarrel between the *Prāṇa* and the organs of the body: how the organs misled themselves by thinking that the *Prāṇa* was a mere idler fattening on their labours. So one by one they left the body. But, though bereaved, the body held together; but when the *Prāṇa* seemed to depart, the whole mechanism began to crumple up. So the organs, having found out their mistake, begged and prayed that the *Prāṇa*, which, of course, is an embodiment of the *Mahā-prāṇa*—the universal principle of life—might not depart, and thus peace was restored. What a contrast between the two fables—the ancient Romans using it to enforce a political, and the ancient Hindus using it to enforce a spiritual lesson.

Leaving classical Greece and imperial Rome and coming down to later times—I mean to Christian Europe—let us try another study in contrast, taking the topic of *Avatāra* or Divine Incarnation as our theme. You know that, according to the Hindu view, *Avatāras* are recognised as having appeared at all times and in all climes—*Avatārā hyasāṅkhyeyāḥ*—अवतारा ह्यसंख्येयाः—so that the Indian is quite ready to recognise Jesus Christ as one of the *Avatāras*. This, however, is not the point of view of Christians, who regard Jesus Christ as the one and only Son of God, and who say, in unequivocal terms, that not to have known Jesus Christ or, having known, to have rejected him is the surest way to damnation. To show that I am not exaggerating, let me read to you a passage from the great divine Saint Augustine. He writes :—

“Be assured, and doubt not that not only men who have obtained the use of their reason, but also little children who have begun to live in their mother’s womb and there died, or who, having been just born, have passed away from the world without the sacrament of Holy Baptism, *must be punished by the eternal torture of undying fire.*”

That reminds me of a true story. It relates to a Hindu matron of Chinsurah, which, as you know, is only a few miles from Calcutta, and was, at the time to which our story relates, a centre of missionary activity. This Hindu lady was far

advanced in years and could hardly read or write. She had a young grandchild, a girl of nine or ten years. A mission-lady was engaged as the girl's tutor and she came every day to impart her lessons. Naturally, the lessons served only as a pretext to extend the Kingdom of Lord Jesus Christ on earth, so that, after reading the lessons with the girl for a few brief minutes, the mission-lady employed the rest of the hour in missionary propaganda. The old lady, who would be seated all the time in a corner of the same room, turning her beads, used to listen, with intense interest, to the moving story of Jesus's life on earth, as related by the mission-lady, and used to shed tears. This gave great encouragement to the mission-lady, and one day she made a frank proposal to the grandmother, "My good woman! Our Lord Christ, I am glad to find, has captured your heart! Why 'don't you renounce Hinduism and from darkness come on to light?" The old lady felt hurt and surprised, and asked, "Why should I? Is not Hinduism good enough for me?" The mission-lady felt rather uncomfortable and put a counter-question, "Then why do you weep at the story of our Lord?" The old lady replied: "How can I help weeping? I never knew about the particular *līlā* of the Lord in Judea that you have been relating. Who can know all his *līlās* at different times and in different climes?" That shows the true catholicity of Indian Culture. It includes everything, it rejects nothing and so is

in marked contrast with, what I might call without disrespect, Western intolerance.

In this connection let me relate to you another story, within my own knowledge. Some years ago, a few friends started a Fellowship Movement in Calcutta, where the followers of the different faiths were to meet on terms of perfect equality. We began rather well and were gathering in broad-minded Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, Christians and Moslems. Presently a rift appeared in our lute. Some of our best Christian members felt compelled to withdraw by reason of pressure from their religious superiors, who felt that the Fellowship was presumptuous in allowing the other faiths to appear on the same platform with Christianity. That is to say, their idea was "my ism" is the "only ism." What an object-lesson in religious snobbery and intolerance! I venture to think that this intolerance, more than anything else, has been responsible for the internecine quarrels within the fold of Christianity itself, before which the squabbles between Śāktas and Vaiṣṇavas and between Shiahs and Sunnis pale into insignificance. Why, only the other day, a true-believing Roman Catholic—he was teacher at an educational institution in Calcutta—told a friend of mine, "You Hindus are bad enough, but the Protestants—the Protestants! They are . . . are unspeakable!"

After this, need we wonder that the Roman Catholic Church should have felt called upon to set up the Inquisition and to employ pious agents

to hunt up Protestant heretics. Do not please make the mistake of thinking that the Inquisitors were blood-thirsty ruffians who took delight in burning people at the stake. Far from it. As Lecky points out, they were often high-minded and disinterested, and their sole concern was to save the *soul* of the sinner. Their one besetting limitation was this intolerance about which I have been speaking—and what terrible results ensued therefrom, what rivers of blood were shed and what mountains of corpses were piled up! Let me give some facts. What is known as the *Massacre of St. Bartholomew* was, as you know, the slaughter of the French Protestants which began on the 24th August, 1572, by secret orders from Charles IX, at the instigation of his mother, Catharine de Medici, and in which, according to Sully, 70,000 Huguenots, including women and children, were murdered throughout the country . . . . . We read—"The following night Catharine held the bloody council, which fixed the execution for the night of St. Bartholomew, August 24, 1572. After the assassination of Coligny, a bell from the tower of the royal palace at midnight gave, to the assembled companies of *burghers*, the signal for the general massacre of the Huguenots. The Prince of Condé and the King of Navarre saved their lives by going to mass and pretending to embrace the Catholic religion. By the King's orders, the massacre was extended throughout the whole kingdom; and the horrible slaughter

continued for thirty days in almost all the provinces."

This was in France. Let us take another illustration, this time from Spain. In the gallery of Madrid, there is a painting by Francisco Rizzi representing the execution, or rather the procession to the stake, of a number of heretics during the fêtes that followed the marriage of Charles II and before the King, his Bride and the Court and Clergy of Madrid. The great square was arranged like a theatre and thronged with ladies in Court dress. The King sat on an elevated platform, surrounded by the chief members of the aristocracy.

Limborch, in his "History of the Inquisition," relates that among the victims of one *auto-da-fé* was a girl of 16, whose singular beauty struck all who saw her with admiration. As she passed to the stake, she cried to the Queen, "Great Queen, is not your presence able to bring me some comfort under my misery? Consider my youth, and *that I am condemned for a religion which I have sucked in with my mother's milk.*"

The Protestants, when they had the opportunity, returned the compliment with compound interest. We read in the "Encyclopedia Britannica"—"The suppression of Roman Catholicism was zealously pursued by Cromwell; the priests were hunted down and imprisoned or exiled to Spain or Barbados, the mass was everywhere forbidden, and the only liberty allowed was that of conscience, the Romanist not being obliged to attend Protestant

services.” And so the see-saw of intolerance and mutual suppression and oppression is still going on in the West and will not stop until it should be leavened with the “cosmopolitanity” of Indian Culture.

In marked contrast, we find that, while the West was engaged in Inquisitions and Crusades and heretic huntings and bloody feuds, India gave harbourage to Parsis driven out of Persia and to Syrian Christians and Jews, so that this our motherland in its wide catholicity has truly become the temple of all religions, and her watchward is, as Ramkrishna put it, “यत् मत, तत् पथ ” that is, as numerous as are the breaths in the nostril of man, so diverse are the ways of approach to God.

Ye yathā māṃ prapadyante tāṃstathaiva  
bhajāmyaham—Gītā.\*

Ruchinām vaichitryād űjukuṭīlanānāpatha-  
jushām,

Nṛṇām tveko gamyastvamasi payasāmarṇava  
iva.†

That this was not merely lip-profession but was worked in practice, is well illustrated by its treatment of Gautama, the Buddha. To start with, he is, as in the Vishṇu Purāṇa, a veritable personification

\* ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।—गीता ।

† रुचीनां वैचित्र्याद्भुजकुटिलानामपथजुषां

वृषां त्वेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसानर्णव इव ।

of *Māyā-moha*—of the principle of delusion and illusion. In fact, in an earlier passage in Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa* (I trust it is an interpolation), he is stigmatised as a thief—

Yathā hi choraḥ sa tathā hi Buddhaḥ.\*

But before two or three centuries are over, He finds a place among the incarnations of Viṣṇu :—

Tataḥ kalau sampravṛtte saṃmohāya  
suradvishām,  
 Buddho nāmnāñjanasutaḥ kikaṭeshu  
bhavishyati.†

Nay more, the Buddha becomes included in the list of the ten classical *Avatāras* :—

Matsyaḥ Kūrmo Varāhaścha Narasiṃho'tha  
Vāmanaḥ,  
 Rāmo Rāmaścha Kṛṣṇaścha Buddhaḥ Kalki  
cha te daśa.‡

\* यथा हि चोरः स तथाहि बुद्धः ।—अयोध्याकाण्ड, १०८।१४

† ततः कलौ संप्रवृत्ते संमोहाय सुरद्वेषाम् ।

बुद्धो नाम्नाञ्जनसुतः कौकटेषु भविष्यति ॥

—भागवत, १।१।१४

Kikaṭa, as we know, is Behar. We read in the *Rg-Veda*—कौकटेषु इव गावः ।

‡ मत्स्यः कूर्मो वराहश्च नरसिंहीऽय वामनः ।

रामो रामश्च कृष्णश्च बुद्धः कल्की च ते दश ॥

—वराहपुराण, ४र्थ अध्याय ।



So we find the poet Jayadeva apostrophising the Buddha :—

Nindasi yajñavidherahaha śruti-jātam, sadaya-  
hṛdaya-darśita-paśughātam,  
Keśava dhṛta-Buddha-śarīra ! jaya Jagadīśa  
Hare !\*

Finally, we find a fusion of the Hindu Śiva and the Buddhist Buddha, repeating in this the same phenomenon as we had witnessed in the coalescence of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism :—

Śivasya hṛdayaṃ Viṣṇur Viṣṇostu hṛdayaṃ  
Śivaḥ.  
Yathā Śivamayo Viṣṇustathā Viṣṇumayaḥ  
Śivaḥ.†

—as you see symbolised in the Hari-Hara Mūrti. This fusion of Śiva and Buddha is exemplified in a Śiva-Buddha Mūrti, recently brought to light by Prof. D. P. Ghose, Curator of the Asutosh Museum, in a village of the Bakharganj District. This image, we are told, represents Śiva, standing erect—the right hand, in ‘Varada’ pose, holding a rosary and the left a vase. Śiva’s trident (त्रिशूल) is shown, as also the third eye

\* निन्दसि यज्ञविधेरहह स्तुतिज्ञातं सदयहृदयदर्शितपशुघातं ।

केशव धृत-बुद्धशरीर । जय जगदीश हरे ॥

† शिवस्य हृदयं विष्णुर्विष्णोस्तु हृदयं शिवः ।

यथा शिवमयो विष्णुस्तथा विष्णुमयः शिवः ॥

on the forehead, and the crescent moon on the matted tiara 'Ūrdhvamedhira,'—all distinctive cognisances of the God. His bull and attendants including Gaṇeśa are also carefully shown.

The chief point of interest in this new discovery is a seated 'Dhyānī Buddha' above the matted tiara—a clear resemblance with Buddhist Mahāyāna deities. 'The similarity in conception of some form of Avalokiteśvara with that of Śiva,' says Dr. Ghose, 'is intensely striking.' But having regard to the genius of Indian Culture, it is, I say, not surprising.

I have already exceeded my time limit and must stop here today. But I have yet to complete my study in contrasts between the Indian and some of the other cultures. So, I shall resume the thread of my narrative in my next lecture.

## FOURTH LECTURE

### PART I

#### CULTURE AND INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL POLITY

FRIENDS,

It will be in your recollection that I said in an earlier lecture, that Culture bodies itself forth in a Nation's Religion, its Philosophy, its Literature and Arts and its Social and Political Institutions. In my last lecture, we studied together the contrasts between the Indian religion and some other religions. Let me, in this lecture, pursue my study in contrast, first in the field of philosophy. I shall, to start with, take up what is called Pantheism in the West (not a very happy expression—I prefer the term Bhūmā-vāda, following the Chhāndogya Upanishad) and contrast Indian Pantheism with its Western counterparts. We have heard the Vedāntic proclamation—

Sarvaṃ khalu idaṃ Brahma\*

—that is, God is all-in-all; for, as the R̥g-Veda puts it—

Ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti. †

“The Real is one, sages call it variously”—that is, it is only a matter of nomenclature, a mere jugglery with words. So, the Chhāndogya says :

\* सर्वं खलु इदं ब्रह्म ।

† एकं सद विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति ।

“Change is only a matter of words: the One abides”—*Vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttikā ityeva satyam*.\* That means that Brahman is and always remains immutable, and in His rock-seated unity there never has been or can be the least shadow of duality. This is pure idealism. But when a grudging concession has been made to the empirical existence of a universe which the Brahman is said to have pervaded and permeated,—*Mayā tatam idaṃ sarvaṃ jagad avyakṭa-mūrtinā* †—what then is the relation between Brahman and this universe? Is He a Being who sits apart on a sapphire throne in the far-off empyrean, as the mere guide and the ruler of the Universe, having no more intimate relation than that with the world He has created, or rather emanated from Himself or is He immanent in and through and through the universe? It is said in this connection in a well-known passage in the Upanishads—“As a lump of salt becomes lost in a basin of water, so Brahman became as if lost in the universe, which He had entered in.” If passages like this stood alone, they would, no doubt, convey the same idea as is generally connoted by the term Pantheism in the West,—according to which God precipitated Himself into the universe, in the same way as cloud is precipitated into rain and milk is precipitated into curd. This is *not* the Hindu idea of

\* विकारी नामधेयं सत्तिका इत्येव सत्यम् ।

† मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्त-मूर्तिना ।

Pantheism, for the Upanishads teach us, over and over again, that Brahman is not only immanent but is also transcendent and that only a fragment of the Divine Life suffices for the whole universe. *Viṣṭābhyaḥ idam kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat.\**

“He is not merged in His work, for vast as that work seems to us, to Him it is but a little thing.” So the Vedānta speaks of creation as the outbreathing of Brahman—*Ānīd avātam* आनीदु अवातम्—performed as *Līlā* (sport), without any effort on His part—and notwithstanding that He pervades the universe as Immanent Deity, He remains the Over-soul, the transcendent God of His universe. *Tad antarasya sarvasya tadu sarvasyāsya bāhyataḥ†*—“He is inside all this and outside of all this also.” This idea is brought out in two beautiful verses of the Kāṭha Upanishad, of which the following is a translation :—

The light, as one, penetrates into space  
And yet adapts itself to every form.  
So the inmost Self of all beings dwells  
Enwrapped in every form, and yet remains outside.

The air, as one, permeates into space  
And yet adapts itself to every form.  
So the inmost Self of all beings dwells  
Enwrapped in every form and yet remains outside.

\* विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ।

† तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ।

And as early as the R̥g-Veda, we read :—

*Pādo'sya viśvā bhūtāni tripād asyāmṛtaṃ divi \**

—‘One quarter of Him are all these (mortal) creatures and the remaining three quarters are immortal in super-space.’

Let me take up next the topic of Pessimism, which is an integral part of Indian Culture, for which it has been reviled by shallow thinkers in the West. As the Buddha reminded us two thousand and five hundred years ago—“Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow, distress, worry, hankering are suffering,—in a word, the five *skandhas* are suffering.” He goes on in ‘Samjukta Nikāya’—“Running from birth to death, from death to birth, we have shed, on this long way, truly more tears than water is contained within the four great oceans.” To sum up, *Sabbam dukkham*—सर्वं दुःखं, that is, *Dukkha jāti punappunam*—दुःखा जाति पुनपुनं—“Life and suffering are, in the last analysis, identical things.” In saying this, Lord Buddha was speaking in the accents of the Upanishads which had declared before him—*Ato'nyad, ārtam*—अतोऽन्यद् आर्तम्—“Outside of the ever-blissful Brahman all is suffering” and also of the Gītā—

which speaks of the world as the abode of suffering—*Duḥkḥālayam aśāśvatam* 'दुःखालयम् अशाश्वतम्'. In fact, all the principal systems of Indian Philosophy (as Max Müller pointed out many years ago) start from the conviction that the world is full of suffering.

This view-point is not unknown in the West. As old Homer tells us in the Iliad :—

Of all that breathe,  
And walk upon the earth or creep, is naught  
More wretched than the unhappy race of man.

And Sophocles, of whom Matthew Arnold spoke in rapturous terms as 'the mellow glory of the Attic stage,' speaking through the lips of the Chorus in *Œdipus at Colonus* says: "Not to be born is past all prizing, best—but when a man has seen the light, this is next best by far, that with all speed he should go thither, whence he has come."

Coming to Christian times, we are told by the great mystic Jacob Boehme that, if all the mountains were books and all the lakes ink and all the trees pens, still they would not suffice to depict all the misery. And Hartmann, the German philosopher, seems to be in accord with him. In his "Philosophy of the Unconscious," he lays down, what Amiel in his *Journal* speaks of as the terrible thesis, that creation is a mistake and being, such as it is, is not as good as not-being, and death

is better than life. Amiel, who was a sensitive soul, felt chilled by this and commented as follows: "If, in fact, it is only illusion which hides from us the horrors of existence and makes life tolerable to us, then existence is a snare and life an evil. Like the Greek Annikeris, we ought to counsel suicide, or rather with Buddha we should aim at annihilation." (Of course, Buddha did not aim at annihilation but that is another matter.) The same also holds good of the philosophy of Schopenhauer, who insists, in common with other Pessimists, that the essence of all life consists in suffering, *but* who, unlike the Indian Pessimists, was unable to find the way and the bridge leading out of suffering. This, then, is the point of departure of the Indian Philosophies. No doubt, they start from the conviction that the world is full of suffering, which is true enough—but they seek to account for this suffering and point out the means how it may be removed. I have in my book "*Gītāya Īśvaravāda*" dealt with this aspect of Indian Philosophy at some length; and expatiated on the particular means recommended by each of the six orthodox systems of Philosophy. But the point to be specially noted is, that all the Indian writers and philosophers, including Lord Buddha, assure us that, if there is 'Muskil,' there is also 'Āsān'—if there is the malady, there is also the remedy—if there is darkness, there is the light beyond. Therefore, fear not—मा भैः '*Mā Bhaiḥ*'—be of good cheer, for, मोचन पाछे ए विपदे—'*Mochan*



*āchhe e vipade* '—पन्था विद्यते अयनाय—*Panthā vidyate ayanāya*. Hear the heartening message of the Buddha :—

If ye lay bound upon the wheel of change  
And no way were of breaking from the chain,  
The heart of boundless being is a curse,  
The soul of things fell pain.  
'No'—he goes on,  
Ye are not bound, the soul of things is sweet;  
The heart of being is celestial rest.  
Stronger than woe is will ; that which was good,  
Doth pass to better—best.

—The Light of Asia, Book VIII.

Therefore the Buddha speaks of *Nirvāṇa* as the highest bliss (*Nibbāṇaṃ paramaṃ Sukkham*—निव्वाणं परमं सुखम्—*Sampāsye vipulaṃ sukham*—संपश्ये विपुलं सुखम्) and characterises it, not only privatively as the ending of all suffering, but positively as the acme of bliss, as *Pāmojja bahulam* (पामोज्ज बहुलम्). This is in accord with the teaching of the Vedānta, which, however, goes one better, and speaking of *Nirvāṇa*, which it calls *Moksha*, says :—

'The bliss of *Moksha* is not only unthinkable and unspeakable, but it is super-bliss.'

\* *Yato vācho nivartante aprāpya manasā saha*.\*

It is '*Ānandaṃ nandanātītam*.' In one passage in the Taittirīya Upanishad, the *Rṣi* makes a

desperate attempt 'to measure the immeasurable', by suggesting that the highest human bliss, enjoyed by an individual, dowered with all the enjoyments and possessions which go to make up happiness, falls short by one-hundred billion times of the bliss of *Moksha*, which bliss is attainable and shall be attained, in the fullness of time, by every single human being—man or woman—who will put forth the appropriate efforts. Does this sound like what is called Pessimism in the West? On the contrary, it would be appropriate to characterise it as the highest and noblest Optimism ever conceived by any philosophy, whether Eastern or Western.

Such, then, is the destiny of man—his amalgamation with God, what some mystics in the West have called "Immersion in the Absolute or Absorption in the Divine Dark"—when the soul is wrapped into the nakedness of Nothing (Henry Suso)—what the Buddha spoke of as "*Śūnyam*"—for, when man who is "the pilgrim of an inward Odyssey" reaches home—

Trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God who is our home

—when he is unified with God, "is incorporated in His members" (St. Augustine),—he attains the supreme unification which is his final destiny, and is able to repeat the Vedāntic formula *So'ham* सोऽहम्—"I and my Father are one." This is

called *Brahma-sājuṣya* in the Vedānta—the highest goal for humanity :

*Yathā nadyaḥ syandamānāḥ samudre, Astaṁ gachchhanti nāmarūpe vihāya.\**

This takes us to such a rarified atmosphere of thought as the votaries of religion in the West are generally unable to breathe in and naturally feel flabbergasted ; but they should read about and inwardly digest the recorded experiences of their own Mystics—I am referring specially to the Christian and also the Sufi mystics. It will be an interesting study to contrast these experiences with the experiences of the Vedāntists and the Vaiṣṇavas. But I have not the time to pursue this fascinating by-path.

Coming next to Civics and Sociology, we may, without going too deeply into the subject, contrast in our study the Eastern castes and the Western classes. Mrs. Annie Besant, so long ago as 1895, made such a study in one of her informing and eloquent lectures. That study remains fruitful even to-day ; and those interested may peruse it with profit. The point to be noted is that inspite of “ democracy ” and “ the rights of man ” and slogans like “ all men are born equal ” and “ universal suffrage,”—in the democratic countries of the West, there are still impassable barriers between the different “ classes ” into which Western Societies are cut up. This is well brought

\* यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रे अस्तं गच्छन्ति नामरूपे विहाय ।

out by Bernard Shaw in his "Back to Methuselah," when he puts this poser to the supposed leader of the Liberal Party: "Would you allow your son to marry my daughter, or your daughter to marry my son," which question, of course, the leader artfully evades. In another passage Bernard Shaw, speaking specially of England, says, "It is a country in which Society is organised in a series of highly exclusive circles, in which no one presumes to speak to anyone else without an introduction, following a strict examination of social credentials," and refers in scathing terms to the working of "England's caste system, club system and guild system," which carefully exclude all chances of social promiscuity.

In her address already referred to, Dr. Besant, after condemning in equally scathing terms the misery, poverty and degradation prevailing in the West, pointed out that neither worth nor wisdom nor birth, achievement or ability was the title to social honour or social power in Western lands, but the jingling of the guinea, wealth—often ill-gotten and evilly accumulated. So that culture was usually crucified on a cross of gold.

As regards class consciousness, Bernard Shaw's indictment has, I find, received corroboration, recently, from a rather unexpected quarter. In a leading article in the "Sunday Statesman" of November 10, 1940, we read the following: "Despite politicians' frequent talk during recent decades about the British nation's democratic structure, many shrewd foreign sociological observers, before

this war, found in Britain a system uniquely rich in recondite snobberies and the subtler manifestations of class-consciousness."

Contrast all this confusion and chaos with the orderly system of *Varṇāśrama Dharma* in this country, to which I made a passing reference in a previous lecture. Take the four castes, which word is rather a mistranslation of "*Varṇa*," which means "colour"—the colour of the *Sūkshma śarīra*, which natally differentiates one individual from another—whereas caste is crass heredity and has divided Hindu Society in these later days into so many as four thousand warring sub-divisions. *Varṇa*, as we know, is based on "*Guṇa-karma*"—natural aptitude and vocation.—*Chāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ*.\*

There are, of course, four and only four, such divisions :

*Brāhmaṇaḥ kṣatriyo vaiśyastrayo varṇā dvijātayaḥ  
Chaturtha eka-jātistu śūdro nāsti tu pañchamaḥ.* †

—Manu, X, 4.

As the *Sāṅkhyas* have taught us, there are the three primary *Guṇas*—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. The individual in whom *Sattva* is predominant

\* चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागश्च ।

† ब्राह्मणः क्षत्रियो वैश्यस्तयो वर्णा द्विजातयः ।

चतुर्थं एकाजातिस्तु शूद्रो नास्ति तु पञ्चमः ॥

is the Brāhmaṇa; the individual in whom *rajas* predominates is the Kshatriya; the individual in whom *rajas* is overlaid with *tamas* is the Vaiśya; and the individual in whom *tamas* is dominant is the Śūdra :

*Sattvādhiko brāhmaṇaḥ syāt kshatriyastu rajo' dhikāḥ  
Tamodhiko bhaved vaiśyo guṇasāmyāt tu śūdratā.\**

—Mahābhārata

These four types are to be met with in all climes and at all times—in democratic England and America, in Nazi Germany, in Fascist Italy, in Bolshevik Russia, as well as in this our own Motherland. Similarly, there are the four aptitudes and vocations—*viz.*, those of the teacher, the warrior, the organiser and the labourer—*Śikṣaka* (शिक्षक), *Śāsaka* (शासक), *Pālaka* (पालक), and *Dhāraka* (धारक).

Thus, the four *Varṇas*, as Dr. Bhagwandas points out, are the four “natural estates” of every civilised realm—the four main subdivisional parts or organs of the social organism, the four natural psycho-physical types of human beings, *viz.*, (a) the man of knowledge, (b) the man of desire, (c) the man of action and (d) the man of unskilled or little-skilled labour. But whereas in

\* सत्त्वाधिको ब्राह्मणः स्यात् क्षत्रियस्तु रजोधिकः ।

तमोधिको भवेद् वैश्यो गुणसाम्यात् तु शूद्रता ॥—महाभारत ।

the West, these *Varṇas* are not rationally organised, but are left to function higgledy-piggledy without system or order, it was the glory of Indian Culture, that it constituted the four *Varṇas* into four guilds (called *Gaṇas* or *Vyūhas*):—

(a) the Educational organisation in charge of the Brāhmaṇas, (b) the Political organisation in charge of the Kshatriyas, (c) the Economic organisation in charge of the Vaiśyas and (d) the Industrial organisation in charge of the Śūdras. These guilds, it should be noted, were elastically self-governing but inter-dependent, so that the three “twice-born” as branches depended on the fourth, the ‘one-born’, as the root. Thus “the Book guided the Sword, the Sword guarded the Granary, the Granary maintained the Plough, and the Plough bore the weight of all.”

To eliminate, moreover, all chances of conflict between *Varṇa* and *Varṇa*, these four guilds were presided over by the *Dharma-Parishat* (Presidium of “Holy Persons”), chosen from all four *Varṇas* as the wisest and best and most experienced of each class, (each member possessing special knowledge and experience of one of the four main departments of human life)—representing mutually supplementary, inter-dependent vocations and departments of knowledge and experience—not only not in conflict, but in positive harmony with, nay, necessary to, each other as organic parts of a whole. This *Dharma-Parishat* was

a very wise and skilful device, and I should like to make a present of it to our present disordered world, to work it into the new world-order which, we are hoping, will emerge after the war, now going on, has been fought and won. What I want to emphasise at the present moment is that, whereas there is a most woeful confusion in the social and economic organisation of the West (which, by the way, having lost the vital truths of re-incarnation and *Karma*, which truths are inherent in Indian culture—every individual is in a hurry—“ I must be happy here and now, for there is no time to be lost,” resulting in a furious urge, a callous cut-throat competition and the accumulation of multi-millions in unworthy hands—so that grinding poverty flourishes in the midst of a plethora of plenty, and though there is *abundant* for all, for lack of right distribution they have to have recourse to restriction and to destruction of plenty to keep up prices artificially;—the Indian scheme of guild socialism, to which I have referred, possessed and still possesses, as Dr. Bhagwandas is careful to point out, great spiritual as well as material value. How ? In various ways. In the first place, the system fitted every person into his right place, so that we had no square pegs in round holes. In the next place, each guild had its own special distinctive means of earning its livelihood prescribed, and must not follow any other in normal times. That is to say, under this scheme, a person belonging



to one guild was not allowed to interlope into another guild so as to encroach upon the rights and duties of the other guilds. And a person earning his living by the pursuit of any one of the four professions was not, except in *Āpat-kāla* permitted to earn anything by any other profession. In the next place, by this arrangement, the concentration of the four main kinds of power, viz., science-power, arms-power, money-power and labour-power (in Sanskrit called *Śāstra-bala*, *Śastra-bala*, *Dhana-bala* and *Śrama-bala*, शास्त्र-बल, शस्त्रबल, धनबल and श्रमबल), with its inevitable disastrous consequences, as seen in some of the Western countries, was avoided, so that neither Theocracy, nor Bureaucracy, nor Plutocracy, nor Mobocracy was allowed to develop, avoiding as it did the evils of the combination of executive with judicial or legislative functions. The topic is capable of much expansion but I have, I think, said enough to bring to your notice the contrasts between Indian Culture and other systems of Culture, in the field of Civics and Sociology.

The last topic that I want to discuss in this connection is Politics or rather Statecraft, the art of Government, with the allied topics of war and peace, invasion and conquest and the treatment of conquered peoples. The first thing I want to draw your attention to, is that India in its long history had experimented with all the known forms of government—autocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and even republics, but discovered (in this,

anticipating England) that a limited monarchy was the most suitable form of government. At the head of the State was the King with his rod of power—usually denominated “*Rājā*”—*Raṇjanāt uchyate rājā* (रञ्जनात् उच्यते राजा). He was not an autocrat and the English maxim “The King can do no wrong” was quite foreign to his thoughts. He was by no means an absolute monarch and was in practice controlled by the *Dharma-Parishat*, already spoken of. He was the Chief Executive and was usually a chivalrous and valorous Kshatriya, ever ready, at the risk of his own life, to protect and guard his people from all kinds of wrongs :—

*Sa eva kṣatriyaḥ proktaḥ kṣatāltrāṇaṃ karoti yaḥ*.\*—Mahābhārata.

The English people are naturally proud of the decapitation of their tyrant king, Charles I. But, in ancient and mediaeval India, such a thing as the killing or deposing of a tyrant, beginning with Vena—was quite a familiar phenomenon.

The ancient Indian ideal was small and compact States like *Kāśī*, *Kośala*, *Pāñchāla*, *Mithilā*, and *Rājagṛha*—and huge Empires in the European sense were unknown. In Europe, as we are assured on high authority, “States are cradled and nurtured in continuous war and grow up by a kind of natural selection, having worsted and subordinated their competitors in the long-drawn-out

rivalry through which they survive." And we are told that ancient Rome, which was a small City-state, grew to be the mistress of the world by this process of natural selection; because, in the words of Benjamin Kid, 'it possessed elements of strength which led to the disappearance before it of other groups with which it came into competition.' This idea is quite foreign to Indian Culture, which lays down as an immutable maxim (I am using the verses of our poet Nabin Chandra)—  
 ये साम्राज्य असिधारे—सृजित से पारावारे, वालिर बन्धन छुद्र  
 —that is, an empire built on force is like a sand-wall built against the waves of the ocean—feeble and futile.

In saying this, I am not ignoring the Mauryya Empire and the Gupta Empire; but they were exceptions, based, we are told, on the model of the Persian Empire, and their imperialism, such as it was, was tempered by the traits of Indian Culture to which I shall presently refer. Nor am I unaware of the fact, that there have been ambitious monarchs in India also, who embarked on careers of conquest (*Dig-vijaya*) as corollary to their *Rāja-sūyas* and *Aśvamedhas*—like Raghu, Yudhishtira and Harshavardhana. But what a remarkable contrast is furnished to such 'Dig-vijaya' by, for instance, Xerxes's invasion of Greece in 480 B.C.! What nation of Asia, asks Herodotus, Xerxes did not lead against Hellas? In the plain of Dorisous, Xerxes reviewed and numbered his

forces. We may read about the list of the nations assembled, in any authentic history of Greece. It was a mighty host and Xerxes's aim was to devastate and destroy Greece; but—

‘He counted them at break of day,  
When the sun set where were they?’

In less than 150 years, the tide had turned and in 330 B.C. Alexander, with a mighty army, invades, conquers, and destroys Persia. The same army is led against India in 326 B.C. with the Conqueror's insatiable lust for destruction. And the fact that he failed to achieve his fell purpose, is not in any way to be attributed to his lack of zeal. Be it remembered that the Hindu ‘Dig-vijaya’s were in no way conquests and invasions in the Western sense. They were merely the exercise of suzerainty, so that for the time being the Dig-vijayī became the *Samrāt*—the nominal Overlord, realising the Vedic ideal—रथीनां त्वा रथीतमं जितारमपराजितम्—*Rathīnām tvā rathītamam jetāram aparājitam*.

But the assenting States were left undisturbed and even those kings who resisted, if killed in the conflict, were replaced by their sons as successors. And we have Manu's injunction that “Immediate security is to be secured to all by proclamation, and the religion and laws of the conquered people are to be respected.” In fact,

the tradition was so well established, that when King Pūru was brought in chains before the conqueror Sikander, the latter questioned him as to what treatment he expected to be meted out to him, and Pūru replied without hesitation, "Well, such treatment as the Dig-vijayī customarily metes out to the subdued monarch." Contrast this with God's instructions to the Israelites, as preserved in the Old Testament. "When the Lord, thy God, hath delivered a city into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword, but the women and the little ones and all that is in the city, even all the spoil, thou shalt *take unto thyself*." No wonder, that Prince Bismarck, following this non-Indian tradition, should have laid down the injunction that a conquered people were to be left only with eyes to weep with, and it is in the fitness of things that his modern prototype, Hitler, in his career of conquest, should kill and devastate and destroy the conquered States; so that Mr. Cordell Hull, the United States Secretary of State, is quite right, when in a recent review of the world situation, as it is to-day, he characterised it as 'one of the saddest and cruellest in the history of mankind and spoke in moving terms of merciless armed attack, unrestrained terrorisation by the slaughter of non-combatant men, women and children, forced labour, confiscation of property, imposed starvation and deprivation of every sort—as weapons which were being constantly used by the conquerors for the subjugation of

vanquished nations.' 'These are grave charges. But are they true? The matter surely requires elucidation. But I have already exceeded my time limit and must reserve further discussion until my next lecture.

## FOURTH LECTURE

### PART II

#### CULTURE AND INDIAN STATECRAFT

FRIENDS,

In our somewhat detailed study of contrasts, I have, in my last two lectures, been discussing the topics of Religion, Philosophy, Civics, Sociology, and Politics. I had to stop, somewhat abruptly, in my last lecture, when studying the contrast between Indian Dig-vijaya and Western methods of conquest. You will recall that in connection with Hitler's career of conquest, I quoted the American Secretary of State Mr. Cordell Hull's weighty words, scathingly indicting Hitler's acts and aims. The question arises, is that indictment justified? I believe it is.

We have it on good authority, that in Rotterdam alone, about 1,00,000 non-combatants were slaughtered or maimed by the rain of bombs and the same thing is being now attempted on London and the industrial towns of England and Scotland, though, by reason of carefully prepared protective measures, the results are much less gruesome. In a recent article in the "Times" newspaper, some facts have been put together to emphasise German ruthlessness in Bohemia, since the French collapse. We are told that, after the collapse of France and the Low Countries, the arrests by the Gestapo and

Black Guards were widened in scope and many Social-Democrats and left-wing politicians, hitherto unscathed, have disappeared. Local Government officials have followed them. The Mayor of Prague is now arrested, so is the city's prominent official, Dr. Nestavak. With officials, have gone away many of the remaining educationists. Dr. Wenig was tortured until his mind gave way. A brother professor of his, Dr. Matejka, is somewhere unknown. . . . But the arrest of the leaders is only one—and not the greatest—of the measures, now being taken by the Germans to stamp out Czech way of life, political, economic, cultural,—all the relics of the former Provincial Autonomy under the Republic have now been scrapped. The Provincial Representative Bodies, Commissions and Committees have been dissolved. More significant still, the Universities have been closed, so that no Czech University is now functioning and the building of Czech elementary schools and secondary schools has been forbidden, etc. etc. Part of the above may be propaganda. But I have no doubt that it is substantially true, for, similar harrowing reports have reached us from other parts of the conquered territories. As a sample I may give a condensed summary of what appeared in the "Manchester Guardian" from the pen of a Polish refugee, who was fortunate enough to escape from Warsaw. He writes: "As soon as the German troops entered the city, they began to remove the Jews, who were set to clearing away



wreckage, cleaning the streets and carrying the luggage. In Warsaw only men were taken, in Lodz and other cities women and children also. . . . An elderly man was vainly battling with a heavy piece of furniture, when a Gestapo officer named Riese asked him why he had not got it into its place. He replied that he could not move it. 'Very well,' said Riese, 'we will give you lighter work.' He took the man into the courtyard and told him to dig a grave. When the Jew had finished it, Riese shot him dead; then he calmly told the rest of the Jews to bury the man and trample on the grave until there was no trace left of it . . . . The courtyard was made into a place of execution. The men at work in the building were taken from time to time into the garden and made to dig big, deep graves. Groups of men, Poles and Jews, were then brought to the place and executed in the presence of the Jewish working parties, who then had to lay the bodies in the graves and to bury them." "A friend of mine, so writes the "Manchester Guardian" writer, "a well-known Jewish actor, and his 16 year old son were among those who were forced to do this work; the nerves of both have been seriously affected to this day by the shock of the experience. . . ."

The writer goes on: "A woman from Lodz told me her own story. She was seized in the street and taken to the railway station to clean the latrines. She was expected to do this with her bare hands and took a piece of her clothing to use as a

rag. She was kept for hours at this work, watched by laughing German soldiers. The humiliation grew unendurable and she began to cry. One of the soldiers then took her filthy rag and wiped her eyes with it saying, 'Don't cry, my darling.' . . .

A woman relative of mine came to me with her luggage. She told me she could no longer bear to remain at home. She told me many appalling things. . . .

'But,' continued my visitor, 'the most horrible thing which has driven me from home, happened yesterday evening. I live in the market-place on the bank of the Vistula. Yesterday evening I heard terrible cries, and when I went to the window I saw two elderly Jewish women running across the square, followed by German patrols who were hitting them on their heads and bodies with the butts of their rifles. First one of the women fell, then the other. The German soldiers then began to push the women into the Vistula with their feet. The women screamed incessantly and the soldiers continued to push them on with their feet. At the riverside, both of the women were pushed into the water. I heard their pitiful cries for a long time, but the German soldiers stood there by the water-side, with rifles levelled at their shoulders. I learned later that the two women had gone to the railway station to go to Warsaw. It was ten to

seven and no one was permitted in the streets after seven o'clock.' "

Many people have commented on the *scientific* planning and execution of military operations by the Nazis. In the sphere of *economic* warfare, *i.e.*, the looting of the conquered countries, the Nazis are not less thorough and scientific. The "Economist" of London recently dealt with this matter in a rather remarkable article. By an elaborate system of paper money and inflation, they secure all their supplies and output, without giving anything in exchange. How? Not that they don't pay to the owners for the goods requisitioned or bought. The Nazis are too clever to resort to that crude form of looting. No, they pay for everything and pay generously—but with the conquered people's own money—so that, in the nett result, Germany obtains everything for nothing. This is worked out by an elaborate system of manipulation and inflation of the currency and by compelling the National banks of the conquered countries to discount the bills and notes of the Nazis, payable after conclusion of peace, for hard cash. Oh, the pity, the pity of it! but what a contrast!

• • •  
You remember Manu's injunction, which I quoted to you in my last lecture—"Immediate security is to be secured to all by proclamation, and the religion and laws of the conquered people are to be respected."

Another contrast is furnished by a comparison of the war, as it is now being waged in Europe and in China, with the Laws of War, as laid down by our great Law-giver Manu and as practised in ancient and mediaeval India. Those rules have been thus summarised :—

1. To make war on one another without treachery ;

2. Not to smite the foe with sharp weapons concealed in wood, nor with arrows mischievously barbed, nor with poisoned arrows, nor with darts blazing with fire ;

3. Not to strike an enemy ' who sues for life with closed palms,' nor one who says ' I am thy captive ' ; nor one who is disarmed ; nor one who is a spectator, not a combatant ; nor one who has broken his weapon ; nor one who has been grievously wounded ;

4. Not to take up arms against one another without warning.

Thus has been declared the blameless primeval law for military men ; from this law a King must never depart, when he attacks his foes in battle.\*

It will be noted, that under Rule 3, non-combatants are to be spared, as also neutrals. The warriors in the old days could never have dreamt

\* Thus, we find in the Mahābhārata (Bhishma Parva) the contending parties in the Bhārata war agreeing to

of such treachery and cruelty as the sinking of neutral ships, burning of Red-Cross hospitals, indiscriminate bombing of old men, women and children,\* etc., etc. So the civilised races who are imposing their peace on Poland and Denmark

observe the following rules which are virtually a reproduction of the laws of war laid down by Vaivasvata Manu:

निवृत्ते विहिते युद्धे स्यात् प्रीतिर्नः परस्परम् ।  
 यथा पुरा यथायोगं न तत् स्याच्छूलनं स्र नः ॥  
 वाचा युद्धे प्रवृत्ते नो वाचेव प्रतियोधनम् ।  
 निष्क्रान्ताः पृतनामध्याग्नं हन्तव्याः कदाचन ॥  
 रथौ च रथिना योद्धी गजेन गजधूर्गतः ।  
 अश्वेनाश्वी पदातिश्च पादातिर्नैव भारत ॥  
 यथायोगं यथाकामं यथोत्साहं यथाबलम् ।  
 समाभाष्य प्रहर्तव्यं न विश्वस्ये न विद्वले ॥  
 एकेन सह संयुक्तः प्रपन्नो विमुखस्तथा ।  
 क्षीणशस्त्रो विवर्मा च न हन्तव्यः कदाचन ॥  
 न सूतेषु न धूर्ध्वेषु न च शस्त्रोपनायिषु ।  
 न मेरीशङ्कुवादिषु प्रहर्तव्यं कथञ्चन ॥

—भीष्मपर्व, १।२७-३२ ।

\* In this connection it is relevant to refer to the testimony of an Indian Major (Mohammad Akber Khan, M.B.E.) as to the plight of war-refugees in devastated Flanders : " It is extremely hard to describe the way they (the Germans) treated the unarmed refugees. They bombed and machine-gunned them. I saw it with my own eyes, at least twice. It was most tragic to see old men and women and children in a state of starvation, out in the open in rain and mud—not knowing where to go to—and then being shot and fired at.

and Holland and France, have much to learn from Indian Culture, as to how to wage war with dignity and how to treat conquered peoples.

And, what about the treatment of women in the devastated lands ? We are receiving reliable reports, as to how defenceless women, and even girls in their teens, are being ravished and violated. To one brought up in the traditions of Indian Culture, with its innate chivalry, which spoke of women as *Mahilās*, the same root from which *Mahishī* (Empress) is derived—and which laid down that where women were honoured and worshipped, all the Gods are pleased and propitiated—यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते सर्वदेवताः—*Yatra nāryastu pūjyante ramante sarvadevatāḥ*,—to one, I say, brought up in these traditions, the ruthless treatment of women in war, seems little short of barbarism. It is true that in the chivalry imposed on Western culture by the institution of Knight-Errantry in the Middle Ages, upliftment of the general status of women was brought about, to an appreciable extent. But War apparently has swept away all that and there is a reversion to the ancient Greek tradition. We find, for instance, in Homer's Iliad, Hector enjoining his 'white-armed spouse, the fair Andromache,' thus :—

“ But go thou home and ply thy household cares,  
The loom and distaff—and appoint thy maids,  
Their several tasks ; and leave to men of Troy,  
And, chief of all to me, the toils of war.”

Similarly, we find the Trojan King Priam, the father of Hector, rebuking his queen Hecuba in these terms :—

“ Seek not to hinder me ; nor be thyself,  
A bird of evil omen in my house ;  
For thou *shalt* not persuade me.”

But this is suavity itself, when compared with the biting and insulting phrases (already quoted), in which the Queen of Heaven, Juno, is addressed by her royal spouse. What a contrast to the status of Draupadī in the Mahābhārata or of Kauśalyā in the Rāmāyaṇa :—

Yadā yadāhi Kauśalyā dāśīvachcha sakhīvachcha  
Bhāryyāvad bhaginīvachcha matrīvachchopatishṭhate.\*  
—Aranya, 12.

• But, let us put on one side, for the moment, the general question of the position of women in Ancient Greece. The Greeks undoubtedly were a civilised race ; but how did they, as conquerors, treat the women of the vanquished warriors ? Let us take, as illustration, Briseis, whose forcible abduction by Agamemnon, from the tent of Achilles, was to Greece the direful spring of woes un-numbered. She, fair as golden Venus,

\* यदा यदाहि कौशल्या दासीवच्च सखीवच्च ।

भार्यावद् भगिनीवच्च मातृवच्चोपतिष्ठते ॥—अरण्य, १२ ।

lamenting the death of Patroclus (Achilles' bosom friend), thus speaks of herself :—

“ The husband of my youth, to whom my sire  
And honoured mother gave me, I beheld  
Slain with the sword before the city walls.  
Three brothers, whom with me one mother bore,  
My dearly-loved ones, all were doomed to death.  
Nor wouldst thou, when Achilles, swift of foot,  
My husband slew and royal Mynes' town  
In ruin laid, allow my tears to flow ;  
But thou wouldst make me (such was still thy  
speech)  
The wedded wife of Peleus' godlike son.”

Not only Briseis but in Achilles' tent we find other captive concubines. Thus we read :—

“ Within the tent's recess Achilles slept ;  
And by his side from Lesbos captive brought,  
Daughter of Phorbas, Diamede fair.  
On the other side Patroclus lay ; with him  
The graceful Iphis, whom, when Seyros' isle  
He captured, and Enyes' rock-built fort,  
Achilles to his loved companion gave.”

So, according to Greek tradition, these women, captives of Achilles' spear, had to become and did become his concubines.

For Homer tells us—the conquering ‘strangers in subjection take the wives of the conquered.’



In another passage, Homer, in enumerating a few of the thousand ills which attend on a captured town, speaks of—

The slaughtered men, the city burnt with fire,  
The helpless children and deep-bosomed dames  
A prey to strangers,

We also find Priam lamenting—

My sons struck down, my daughters dragged away  
In servile bonds; our chambers' sanctity  
Violated; and our babes by hostile hands  
Dashed to the ground ; and by ferocious Greeks  
Enslaved the widows of my slaughtered sons.

One of the most moving scenes in Homer's Iliad is the meeting of Hector and Andromache in the interval of battle. Andromache, in tears, hung on his arms and begged her husband to remain within the tower, so as to avoid fell Achilles and not make their child an orphan and herself a hapless widow. To her great Hector of the glancing helm replied thus :

Think not, dear wife, that by such thoughts as these  
My heart has never been wrung ; but I should blush  
To face the men and long-robed dames of Troy,  
If like a coward I should shun the fight.

And he goes on :—

But not the thoughts of Troy's impending fate  
Nor loss of brethren, numerous and brave,

By hostile hands laid prostrate in the dust,  
 So deeply wring my heart as thought of thee.  
 Thy days of freedom lost, and led away  
 A weeping captive by some brass-clad Greek;  
 Haply in Argos, at a mistress' beck,  
 Condemn'd to ply the loom, or water draw  
 From Hyperesia's or Messeis' fount,  
 Heart-wrung by stern necessity constrain'd.  
 Then they who see thy tears perchance may say,  
 'Lo, this was Hector's wife, who, when they fought  
 On plains of Troy, was Ilium's bravest chief.'  
 Thus may they speak; and thus thy grief renew  
 For loss of him, who might have been thy shield  
 To rescue thee from slavery's bitter hour.  
 Oh, may I sleep in dust, ere be condemn'd  
 To hear thy cries, and see thee dragged away.

Such fate was then reserved for the honoured  
 spouse of Hector, the bravest of the brave, who,  
 after the hero has fallen, thus laments her coming  
 doom :—

Since thou art gone, Troy's guardian ; thou whose  
 arm  
 Defended her, her wives and helpless babes ;  
 They now shall shortly o'er the sea be borne,  
 And with them I shall go ; thou too, my child,  
 The suffering victim of a tyrant lord ;  
 Unless perchance some angry Greek may seize  
 And dash thee from the tower—a woeful death !

As I have said, all this is beyond the comprehension of one nurtured in Indian Culture. So we find Rajput women, when faced with a similar fate at the hands of foreign conquerors, immolating themselves on the funeral pyre, rather than submit to it :—

ज्वल ज्वल चिता द्विगुण द्विगुण  
 पराण सँपिबे विधवा बाला ।  
 ज्वलुक ज्वलुक चितार आगुन  
 एखनि जुड़ावे प्राणेर ज्वाला ।

There was another tradition in Homeric Greece, which an Indian cannot but severely reprobate— I mean the maltreatment of the corpses of fallen foes by the slaying warriors. One can understand that they should strip the dead of their armours and their coats of mail, which were often of value and were regarded as the death-dealer's legitimate prize. But how could brave men bring themselves to "foully misuse the corpses of the slain"? We find in Homer, that more than half of the bloody duels (*Dvairatha Yuddhas*), which he describes as happening between the contending armies, were waged round the corpses of slain warriors, either to defend them or to snatch them away by the slayer. The interested reader may, in this connection, refer to Book XVII, describing the duels round Patroclus's body. We may take the treatment of Hector's corpse by the brave

Achilles, when Hector is slain, as typical. Achilles, having stripped the armour from the corpse, thus addresses the assembled Greeks :—

Now to the ships return we, sons of Greece,  
Glad pæans singing ! with us *he* shall go.  
Great glory is ours, the godlike Hector slain,  
The pride of Troy and as a God revered.

And how did he treat his fallen foeman's corpse? Let us hear Homer :—

He said, and foully Hector's corpse misus'd ;  
Of either foot he pierced the tendon through,  
That from the ankle passed to the heel,  
And to his chariot bound with leathern thongs,  
Leaving the head to trail along the ground ;  
Then mounted, with captured arms, his car,  
And urg'd his horses ; nothing loath, they flew.  
A cloud of dust the trailing body rais'd.  
Loose hung his glossy hair ; and in the dust  
Was laid the noble head, so graceful once ;  
Now to foul insult doom'd by Jove's decree,  
In his own country at a foeman's hand.

And this, not in the first flush of victory and in the paroxysm of grief for his slaughtered friend, but the maltreatment went on for a fairly long period ; and, every now and then, he would harness his flying steeds and with the corpse of Hector, trailing in the dust behind the car, thrice make the circuit of Patroclus' tomb and would then turn within his tent to rest, 'leaving the prostrate corpse

with dust defiled.' And this would have gone on indefinitely, had not Almighty Jove, taking pity, interfered and saved 'the senseless clay from these foul insults'. Contrast all this with the treatment of Rāvaṇa by Srī Rāma, when he had slain his foe. Not only was the body not maltreated, but heroic Rāma Chandra himself assisted in his foe's funereal rites. We also find in the Mahābhārata that after Duryodhana, the mortal enemy of the Pāṇḍavas, was slain in the *gadā-duel*, his body was respected and given the full honours of a regal funeral.

But, let us for once leave the valley misty with controversies, and, gaining the serene hill-top, ask ourselves the all-important question—what is the political ideal which is consonant with Indian Culture? It is, to be sure, not isolation but integration; not separate Sovereignty (which has proved the bane of the League of Nations) but co-operative collectivism; not narrow nationalism—much less insular patriotism—but a world-wide internationalism or rather cosmopolitanism; not a meretricious League of Whitemanity, but a true and real League of Humanity—in a word, a World State,—what I call a जगद्-व्यापी महा-राष्ट्र (*Jagad-vyāpī Mahārāshṭra*)—cemented by a living consciousness of human brotherhood and (in the words of Count Richard Kalergi) to be formed by the organisation of the whole world as a single federation of States,—the ideal being a United States of the whole world, where "all peoples are a single

nation ” and wherein the constituent States, each keeping its individuality intact and developing along its own lines for the attainment of full self-realisation, are to be united in an all-embracing unity, to serve as units in a gigantic world-organism, as true *vyashtis* in an all-inclusive *Samashṭi*. This Ideal is beautifully put in a Sanskrit verse which some of us love to repeat :—

Mātā me Pārvatī devī pitā devo Maheśvaraḥ  
Bhrātaro manujāḥ sarve, svadeśo bhuvana-

trayam.\*

“ Pārvatī Devī, the world-Mother, is my mother, the Lord Maheśvara, the Father of all, is my father ; all men are my brothers, the whole world is my fatherland.”

‘All men are my brothers ’—*that* strikes the keynote. As Lord Lothian, the late British Ambassador to the United States, has finely said : .

“ It is the teaching of Christianity that all men are brethren—the children of one Father . . . . . National sovereignty is at bottom, a denial of the brotherhood of man. That brotherhood can only be established by bringing *all* people under the reign of a single constitutional law, which unites them all and which at the same time assures them both individual freedom and responsibility.”

\* माता मे पार्वती देवी पिता देवो महेश्वरः ।

भ्रातरो मनुजाः सर्वे, स्वदेशो भुवनत्रयम् ॥

This is the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World, of which Tennyson sang :—

When the war drums throb no longer, the  
battle flags are furled,  
In the Parliament of Man, the Federation  
of the World.

निभिबे समर दावानल  
जाति जाति जने जन, भुलि बैर चिरन्तन  
—दुर्बल प्रबल,  
भाइ भाइ मिलि सबे एक महाप्राण  
साधिवे स्त्रष्टार विश्व-कार्य सुमहान् !

Our own poet Nabin Chandra has put the ideal even more beautifully :—

शिखाव एकत्व मर्म  
एक जाति एक धर्म  
एरूपे करिब एक साम्राज्य स्थापन  
समग्र मानव प्रजा—राजा नारायण !

But, I hear someone objecting—‘Yes, that is a beautiful ideal but unrealisable.’ The objector goes on : ‘I quite admit that until such a United States of the whole world, as you are dreaming of, should be established, there can or will be no real peace or appeasement, but—’ To him my reply is : the ideal is not only a beautiful one, but is being beautifully realised—slowly, but surely. How? In my address on ‘The Message of the

Vedānta " at the last International Convention of the Theosophical Society, I had occasion to deal with this very question, and do not wish to repeat myself. As Mr. Streit, in his book "Union Now," rightly recognises, having regard to the wide divisions caused by race, language, religion, civilization and system of Government, it will be impossible to unite the whole world into a single organic unity *straightway*. So, between the present "National" period of humanity and the World-State-to-be, there must (Count Kalergi had pointed this out before him) inevitably intervene a Continental period, when parochial patriotism for the narrow geographical unit we call *our* country, shall be enlarged into patriotism for larger areas of the world. So far, however, only three instances of this movement have emerged towards a "Continental" period. These are :—

(a) The Pan-European movement, whose aim is to make European boundaries invisible (as the frontier is now between England and Scotland) and to form a United States of Europe.

(b) The Pan-American movement intended to organise the Republics of the American Continent into some form of federation, to secure peace in the New World and make it safe for democracy.

(c) The British Commonwealth of Nations, which is already fairly organised and in which the United Kingdom of Great Britain, the Free State of Ireland, and the Great Dominions of Canada,



Australia, New Zealand and South Africa are coalescing into a gigantic Commonwealth.

As regards the wished-for United States of Europe, it is true that with the rise of German Imperialism, the prospects of a European Federation rather receded into the background, though it is to be noted that even Hitler has paid lip homage to this ideal and says he is out to establish the new world order in Europe, from which however England is to be excluded and of which Germany is to be the absolute dictator. But I feel sure that this is only a temporary obscuration and that with the extermination of imperialism, as the result of the war now going on, the emergence of a United States of Europe in the near future may be looked forward to with confidence.

As you might have discerned, Pan-Americanism has recently received a very strong impetus as the result of America's inevitable reaction to the Tripartite Pact which Japan has actively joined. So one feels confident that, with President Roosevelt as the leader, a Pan-American Continent-State is about to emerge in the not distant future.

The British Commonwealth of Nations is, on the whole, working on right lines. It is not (as Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State, rightly pointed out the other day) of the nature of a solar system, with a central sun and satellite planets revolving round it, but is a partnership of free and equal

nations, girdling the globe. But its one weak point is the exclusion of India and her treatment as a Dependency, rather than as a Dominion. I feel sure that immediately after the War, England will recognise India as a completely equal partner with herself and the Dominions and make free and liberated India an integral part of that Commonwealth. Thus India's rightful place being secured in the comity of free and federated States composing what is at present designated as the British Empire—the Continental stage will have been reached. These three Continental States, having thus been established on stable and secure foundations, will serve as preludes to the World-State destined to be. So, I repeat that the World-State is not a chimera but is the Ideal towards which the whole world is surely moving. Moreover, as I have said, that is the political system which alone is in accord with Indian Culture and, what is more, it has received the *imprimatur* of the great Patriarch of our race, Lord Vaivasvata Manu. As Dr. Bhagwan Das, in speaking of Him, points out in his "Science of Social Organisation," p. 449, "In Him we find no narrow parochialism, no provincialism—not even nationalism, but only Humanism—*Vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam*, (वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्)—the organisation into one Joint 'Family of all the types, of all the families, races and sub-races of the whole Human Race—for the Manu was able to look beyond nationalism into the vast stretches of soul of the Ancient Ethos."

Let me here close my study in contrasts, which, I find, has far exceeded the limits I intended to set to it.

In my next lecture (which will be the last of the series) I shall deal with the trends of Indian Culture, and try to vision its future.

## FIFTH LECTURE

### THE FUTURE OF INDIAN CULTURE

FRIENDS,

In this the final lecture of the series, I propose to examine, however cursorily, the trends of Indian Culture, so as to be able to indicate its possible future. It goes without saying that, to know the future, one must study the past. You know how, in the past, Indian Culture spread out beyond the confines of India, in its glorious career of expansion—its *jaya-yātrā*, as I may call it. May I, in this connection, recall to you the words of our Chāraṇa-Kavi Dwijendra Lal :—

एकदा याहार विजय-वाहिनी हेलाय लङ्का करिल जय ।

एकदा याहार अर्णवपोत भ्रमिल भारत सागरमय ॥

सन्तान यार तिब्बत चीन जापाने गठिल उपनिवेश ।

तुइ किना मागो तादेर जननी तुइ किना मागो तादेर देश ॥

—which may thus be translated :—

“Once upon a time, Her conquering fleet subdued Lāṅkā in a trice—once Her sea-going vessels careered over the whole Indian Ocean, and Her children built up colonies in Tibet, China, and distant Japan. Art thou Mother Bāṅga, the same Mother as of yore—the self-same blessed land?”

Here the poet was thinking only of Mother *Baṅga*. But if we think of Mother India—then the canvas has to be very much enlarged; and we have to think of the expansion of Indian Culture, not only in the East—Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Bali, Sumatra, Tibet, China, Mongolia, Java, as far as Japan—but also in the West as far as the Grecian Archipelago, including Persia, Turan, Tartary, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Palestine and Asia Minor—in its wide sweep. What we have to note is that this urge for expansion is not yet extinct—nay, it is far from exhausted. In case you should doubt or dispute this assertion, as some of you may be inclined to do, let me, in order to prove my case, call into the witness box a very reliable witness. I am referring to Dr. Jung of Psycho-analysis fame, the co-worker of Freud, who, as you will remember, attended the International Science Congress held at Calcutta, three years ago. You have probably heard of that precious little Chinese classic, “The Secret of the Golden Flower” (Tai I’chin). Richard Wilhelm, the well-known Sinologue, who, more than any other European, had been able to ‘penetrate deeply into the secret and mysterious life of Chinese wisdom,’ published, in 1929, a German translation of that Chinese book. In 1931, Cary Baynes published an English translation of the same book, with what is called “A European Commentary” by Dr. Jung, which is remarkable in many ways.

'As you know, Kipling, in his shallow way, had declared :—

“ For, East is East and West is West,  
And ne'er the twain shall meet.”

But Wilhelm, with deeper insight, entered his caveat against this and declared that “ East and West were no longer to remain apart.” Dr. Jung, in the Commentary already referred to, carried the matter one step further. He said that when Rome overthrew the Near East politically, the spirit of the East entered Rome and, out of the most unlikely corners of Asia Minor, came a new spiritual Rome: What had happened then was likely to be repeated once again. The European invasion of the East was, he declared, a deed of violence on a great scale, and it had left Europeans the duty—*noblesse oblige*—of understanding the mind of the East. The process had not only begun, but had gone quite far, so that, in the words of Dr. Jung, “ The spirit of the East penetrates through all our pores and reaches the most vulnerable places of Europe.” To this the translator, Cary Baynes, adds his own testimony as follows :—

“ If we but briefly investigate the fields covered today by what is called ‘ occult thought,’ (we find) that millions of people (in the West) are included in these movements and Eastern ideas dominate all of them.”

So, once again we are encountering the same phenomenon that we did when Rome in the old days conquered Greece and was itself conquered by and succumbed to Grecian culture. And thus the balance of the East and the West is being adjusted and India's debt to Western culture is being repaid with interest.

As a convincing illustration of the penetration of Indian Culture, I may mention an incident recorded by Colonel Olcott, to whom I have had occasion to refer in another connection, and who, some of you may not know, was an inveterate globe-trotter. In the course of one of his world-tours, he happened to visit Iceland. It was then the Arctic winter; but the long-drawn Arctic night was partially illuminated by coruscations from the Aurora Borealis. Colonel Olcott took it into his head to go down one of the coal mines of Iceland. Inside, he met a miner reading a small book in the light of a seal's lard-lamp. He felt curious and asked the miner what book he was reading. The miner told him that it was an Icelandic translation of the Bhagavad Gītā. We may now see that it was not for nothing that Emerson had earlier sent for the identical book all the way from India. Emerson, by the way, was distinctly Indian in his outlook and the sage of "Concord" was therefore regarded by many as a geographical mistake. Col. Olcott himself was an American by birth. He had fought on the side of the North

and against slavery in the American Civil War and had been promoted a Colonel by President Lincoln. After his retirement from the Army, he became interested in Indian thought and in November, 1875, he founded, with Madam Blavatsky, the Theosophical Society. Later, he came out to India and settled down at Adyar, in the suburbs of the city of Madras. I remember Col. Olcott telling me, many years ago—his words were so impressive that they have stuck to my memory—he had just returned from a world-tour and he and I were standing on the roof of the Headquarters Hall of the Theosophical Society, with the blue sea shimmering in the near distance and a background of cocoanut palms. The Col. said: "I have travelled, Baboo Sahib, in all parts of the world, but it is Adyar which I love best. In my absence on my world tour, I have been thinking of Adyar all the time and longing to return to it."

Now, why did this matter-of-fact American have a sort of nostalgia, home-sickness, for his beloved Adyar? Because Indian Culture had conquered his heart.

The same thing happened with his successor in the Theosophical presidency, Dr. Annie Besant. You know Dr. Besant was an Englishwoman with a strong infusion of Irish blood in her veins. She had, until she came out to India in December, 1893, been nurtured in the English atmosphere and naturally was thoroughly



Western. But Indian Culture had slowly been conquering her soul. Hear how she felt, when she first touched India's soil (I am quoting her own words): "When I landed here for the first time, I knew what love of country meant. For then, the whole life came out into flower and taught me the fragrance of the land that is your own, the love of a crowd merely because they were fellow-countrymen and the feeling that at last you have come to the place you have loved and tried even blindly to serve, before yet you had trodden on its soil." As another illustration, take Dr. Arundale, whom many of you may know as the Hony. Principal, for many years, of the Benares Central Hindu College and who is now the President of the Theosophical Society. This is how he recently voiced his feeling towards India: "I think of India and talk of it, because I feel freer in India myself than in any other country throughout the world. Though I am very much attached to my country of physical birth, England, it cannot give me that which my country of spiritual birth is able to give me. If I can be freer, if I can feel myself raised in spiritual stature, if I can see more clearly, if my life is more purposeful, my emotions better directed, my mind more clear, my life more harmonious,—it is because I live in India. Many others can say the same."

This gives you a good illustration of what Dr. Jung has called the penetration of Eastern culture.

But, you may regard all this as interested testimony, and therefore partial. So, I will put two missionary witnesses into the witness-box. A good and earnest missionary, after having preached the gospel to the heathens in India for about 40 long years, at last retired and returned to his native land. What was his surprise when he found (as he himself expressed) that many of the superstitious ideas (such as re-incarnation and Karma, which doctrines, though hinted at in the Bible and forming part of the Christian teaching in the earlier centuries, are anathema in these latter days) had been gaining acceptance in his own country! That reminds me of a story in the Purāṇas. We are told, that in the ancient days, there was a king of the name of Raivata. He had the rare good fortune of travelling to *Brahma-loka*, where he had the privilege of an audience with Brahṁā himself for a few minutes. As you know, the vibrations in that lofty plane are so rapid that what is one instant there, is an eon down here. So when Raivata returned to earth, he found, to his surprise, long ages having passed in the interval, that the face of the world had undergone cataclysmic changes. I trust, like King Raivata, our missionary friend was able somehow to adjust himself to the changed environment in his native land.

But let me call another distinguished witness, whose veracity no one will venture to question.

I am referring to the Rev. Dr. Miller, for over twenty years the Head of the Madras Christian College. When he retired to his own country, his friends put to him a question: 'Dr. Miller, during your long stay in India have you learnt anything?' What was Dr. Miller's reply? 'Yes, I have learnt a great lesson—it is "the Immanence of God and the Solidarity of Man." That puts in a nutshell the whole teaching of the Vedānta, which, as you know, is the crown and consummation of Indian Culture.

It is therefore not difficult to anticipate that Indian Culture has a great future and that in the coming world reconstruction, which is to follow the devastating war now in progress, Indian Culture will have an important part to play. That is why this age-old culture has been preserved and conserved by the spiritual powers—that-be—the all-wise guardians of humanity, called 'R̥shi-Saṅgha' in the Upanishads—in spite of the cataclysms that from time to time appeared almost to overwhelm it.

In this connection, I want to recall to your mind a remarkable prophecy about the future of India that was recorded by Dr. Annie Besant in 1910, in the pages of the "Central Hindu College Magazine," a journal which she was then editing. She began by saying that two views of India's future had been put forward—one that India was effete and was passing into decay, to vanish as Babylon and Egypt had vanished. The other view was that India had a future greater than her

past and was destined to rise to a peak of dazzling glory as the Heart of the Greatest Empire that the world had yet seen. And it was the second of those two views that she herself shared. She then proceeded to say that the evolution of humanity was guided by a mighty Brotherhood of Sages, an occult Hierarchy composed of 'just men made perfect'—whom in this country we speak of as *Rshis*, who constantly watch over it, preparing for a foreseen end and working out the details of a mighty plan committed to their charge. From time to time, when it suited their purpose, they divulged a fragment of their plan that it might win conscious co-operation from the 'willing and the devoted'. And Dr. Besant claimed that a corner of the veil had been lifted to her gaze and she had been privileged to see it. She went on: "Through much tribulation has India been guided for some five thousand years, in order that by conquest, colonisations, wars, tumults and manifold grindings of the divine wheel—various races and sub-races might be mingled in the blood of India's children (and I might add culture), to enrich the current of her life. Some mighty intellects were sent to India to take birth in it, to build its literature and from time to time some lofty egos to inspire its spiritual life. Then the Manu sent these intellectual giants to take birth elsewhere, in other branches of his Aryan race. . . . Differentiation had done its work and the time for re-integration began to dawn. Messenger after messenger were sent to the West

in order to permeate its turbulent civilizations with the higher spiritual ideas ; splendid intellects were sent thither to lead it onwards to heights of scientific knowledge and artistic achievement. In the 19th century, the time had come for a more sympathetic mutual understanding between East and West, between the Elder and Younger branches of the Aryan family . . . above all to blend into one the eldest and the youngest children of the Aryan race, the Indians and the English (in cultural concord). On this union, close, brotherly, indissoluble—the future Empire depends, and it is *inevitable*. Those who strive against it will be eliminated, for the will of the Great Father (Vaivasvata Manu) must be wrought out. The rebellious, the haters, the inciters to strife will be scattered. . . . When that Union is accomplished, when the field is ready, then Vaivasvata Manu will send hither the master intellects of humanity, to raise the people, composed of the best elements of His race, to a dazzling height of glory in the great Aryan Empire (which Mrs. Besant later loved to call the Indo-British Commonwealth), that will stand revealed.”

That being the destiny of India, I say it is not only futile but foolish to work for separate sovereignty for India—what has been called *Pūrṇa Svārāj*—thus preferring the ideal of isolation to that of integration. Why? Because, in the first place, it is against Nature’s predestined plan and therefore cannot succeed, and secondly, with ruthless Japan

on one flank and relentless Russia on the other, it is not worth even a day's purchase.

As Shakespeare told us through the lips of Hamlet, "There is a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them, how we might " and the divine plan, which I have referred to, is at the present moment being worked out before our very eyes. And it is to achieve this mighty consummation that the present devastating war is being waged. It is designed 'to make the world safe,' not so much for Democracy as for 'the universal reign of reverence, good-will and compassion,' so that races and cultures will respect each other's greatness, nations will recognise each other's worth, and religions will cherish each other's sanctity and individuals will learn that "God Almighty has but one great family, in which the denizens of every Kingdom of Nature are His beloved children." Thus tyrannies, injustices, oppressions, exploitations and mal-distributions between one race and another, one nation and another, one faith and another, one caste or community and another shall be things of the past. All this implies a mighty change of heart. Does it not ? How is that to be brought about ?

In the immediate future and as the direct result of the present war, India will, as I have said, cease to be a dependency and become a fully self-governing State, in fraternal accord with the other States which now form what is called the British Empire, which shall cease to be an Empire

and become a true Federation, which the United States of America will probably join as a willing partner, and in that mighty Commonwealth of Nations, which Dr. Besant, with her illuminated vision, saw as the Great Aryan Empire of the future, India and Indian Culture, will have an honoured place. She will, as we can foresee, become the religious High Priest of humanity and her culture, with the noble characteristics which I have tried, however inadequately, to limn, will transform civilization and yet redeem the world. Thus, in the new World-Order that is coming, Indian Culture will have a glorious function to discharge, *viz.*, to act as the pivot to move humanity to a happier and holier living. This then is the future of Indian Culture, as I see it. It is for this thrice-glorious destiny that India has been preserved through the ages. As our Viśva-Kavi Rabindranath has put it :—

से परम परिपूर्ण प्रभातेर लागि  
 हे भारत ! सर्वदुःखे रह तुमि जागि  
 सरल निर्मल चित्त, सकल बन्धने  
 आकारे स्वाधीन राखि'—पुष्य ओ चन्दने  
 . आपनार अन्तरेर माहात्म्य-मन्दिर  
 सज्जित सुगन्ध करि', दुःखनस्र शिर  
 द्वार पदतले नित्य राखिया नौरवे ।

which may be thus translated :—

In that full-blown dawn (sure to grow into glorious day), O Bhārata, stay thou awake amidst thy suffering—with a simple, pure heart, keeping thy soul free from all fetters—decorating thy inner shrine of greatness with sweet-scented flowers and sandal-paste and laying thy grief-bowed head ever on His feet—in silence !

Friends ! You will appreciate that we are the inheritors of a great culture, a unique culture. It is too precious to be neglected or lost, for we hold it, and the wisdom of our R̥shi-ancestors, in sacred trust for the salvation of mankind. See to it that you conserve it and hand it on untarnished to your sons and grandsons. It is a precious, a glorious heritage. Let us be worthy of it. My last words will be a quotation from a remarkable pronouncement by Dr. Arundale, who, lately speaking of the ‘India-to-be,’ used these pregnant words :—

“The India-to-be must be Indian, the India-to-be must be herself to be unique, must be filled to the brim with her own splendid genius and must work her own way through the ages, inspired by the past, by the collective culture of the various faiths that have found their place in this country—and inspired no less by the future which some of us believe to await this country.

Side by side with the political freedom which India certainly needs, I do most earnestly hope



that she shall gain her educational, her cultural freedom. Without refinement, without the spirit of Indian Culture brooding over every citizen, of what avail will be mere political freedom ? Of what avail will be mere democracy, unless it is a democracy of refinement as well as a democracy of power ?''